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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE TRAINING NEEDS OF PARENT EDUCATORS

by

CAROL HELEN HUMPHRIES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1987

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE TRAINING NEEDS OF PARENT EDUCATORS submitted by CAROL HELEN HUMPHRIES in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

.....

Supervisor

R. G. McIntosh

.....

Peggy Anne Field

.....

Date September 29, 1987

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the training needs of parent educators in greater Edmonton and to identify alternatives to meet those needs.

This research was designed as a descriptive survey. Data were collected by a questionnaire developed specifically for this study. Its purpose was to access information about the training needs of parent educators in five areas: background, content areas of parent education, teaching skills for parent educators, training of parent educators and professional development of parent educators. The instrument was distributed to 137 parent educators in the Edmonton area. Useable returns were received from 80 parent educators for a return rate of 58 percent.

Descriptive and analytical statistical procedures were used to address the objectives of the study, and content analysis was used to analyze the open-ended written responses.

The major findings indicated that parent educators in greater Edmonton were female, and though most had university degrees, the majority would commit to a certificate in parent education. The most commonly used content areas were those delivered by parent educators who taught prenatal classes. The most common teaching skills

used by parent educators included lecture, demonstration and models, and audio-visual aids. There was a relationship between the content areas and teaching skills used by respondents and those determined to be essential to preservice training. Though academic education was cited as the most significant source of teaching skills and content areas, inservice training was deemed the most important method of inservice training. Indeed, there was a definite need expressed for more inservice training.

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Table of Contents

Chapter — Page

List of Tables xiv

1. NATURE OF THE STUDY 1

Introduction.....1

Background to the Problem.....4

Need for the Study.....6

Purpose of the Study.....8

Definition of Terms.....9

Significance of the Study.....10

Delimitations of the Study.....12

Limitations of the Study.....12

Assumptions of the Study.....13

Organization of the Study.....13

Summary.....14

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....15

Historical Overview.....18

Types of Parent Educators.....21

Specialists in Parent Education.....22

Professional Leaders.....22

Trained Leaders.....23

Untrained Volunteers.....24

Adult Educators.....25

Family Life Educators.....27

Selection of Parent Educators.....28

The Current State of Training.....30
Training Approaches.....31
Training Sources.....35
Training Needs.....40
The Content of Training.....41
Content.....42
Methodology.....46
Philosophy.....48
Participation in Training.....49
Barriers to Training.....51
Summary.....53
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....54
The Questionnaire.....54
Development of the Instrument.....55
Background.....57
Content Areas of Parent Education.....58
Teaching Skills for Parent Educators.....59
Training of Parent Educators.....60
Professional Development of Parent Educators.63
Instrument Revision.....63
Pilot Testing.....65
Validity of the Instrument.....66
Reliability of the Instrument.....67
Identification of the Sample.....67
Collection of Data.....68

Analysis of the Data.....68
Summary.....69
4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.....71
Demographic Information.....71
Gender.....72
Highest Level of Schooling.....72
Type of Parent Educator.....73
Adequacy of Academic Preparation.....75
Length of Service.....76
Primary Role.....76
Teaching Skills and Content Areas.....77
Use of Teaching Skills.....77
Source of Teaching Skills.....78
Essential Teaching Skills and Content Areas..85
Training.....88
Screening and Selection of Parent Educators..88
Importance of Training Methods.....89
Effectiveness of Training Approaches.....90
Participation in Past Training.....91
Barriers to Participation.....92
Need for Inservice.....94
Purposes for Participating in Training.....94
Commitment to a Training Format.....96
Responsibility for Training.....97

Professional Development.....98
Pressing Training Needs.....99
Improvements to the Delivery of Training....103
General Comments.....106
Summary.....110
5. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.....113
Age.....114
Gender.....114
Sources of Content Areas.....115
Sources of Teaching Skills.....117
Essential Content Areas 118
Selection of Parent Educators.....120
Participation in Training.....121
Barriers to Participation in Training.....122
Need for Training.....123
Commitment to Training.....124
Summary.....125
Highest Level of Schooling.....126
Sources of Content Areas.....127
Essential Teaching Skills.....128
Commitment to Training Format.....130
Responsibility for Training.....131
Summary.....132
Adequacy of Academic Preparation.....133
Sources of Content Areas/Teaching Skills....133

Length of Service.....139
Sources of Content Areas.....139
Sources of Teaching Skills.....142
Effectiveness of Training Approaches.....143
Participation in Training Approaches.....144
Barriers to Participation in Training.....145
Purposes for Participating in Training.....146
Essential Teaching Skills for Preservice....147
Summary.....149
Type of Parent Education.....149
Sources of Teaching Skills.....150
Sources of Content Areas.....152
Essential Content Areas in Preservice.....154
Selection of Parent Educators.....156
Barriers to Participation in Training.....157
Summary.....158
Primary Role.....158
Essential Content Areas in Preservice.....159
Sources of Teaching Skills.....161
Barriers to Participation in Training.....162
Commitment to Training Format.....163
Responsibility for Training.....164
Summary.....165
Summary.....165

Summary.....165

Summary.....165

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....167

Summary.....167

The Problem.....167

The Procedure.....168

Findings.....169

Conclusions and Implications.....171

Conclusions.....171

Implications.....183

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....187

APPENDIX A
INSTRUMENTATION.....193

APPENDIX B
COVERING LETTER.....204

APPENDIX C
FOLLOW-UP LETTER.....206

List of Tables

Table		Page
1.	Age of Parent Educators	72
2.	Highest Level of Schooling	73
3.	Type of Parent Educator	74
4.	Adequacy of Academic Preparation	75
5.	Length of Service	76
6.	Teaching Skills Used by Parent Educators	78
7.	Distribution of Sources of Teaching Skills	80
8.	Content Areas Used by Parent Educators	82
9.	Distribution of Sources of Content Areas	83
10.	Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training	85
11.	Essential Teaching Skills For Preservice	86
12.	Selection of Parent Educators	88
13.	Importance of Methods of Training	89
14.	Effectiveness of Training Approaches	90
15.	Participation in Past Training	91
16.	Barriers to Participation in Training	93
17.	Need for More Inservice Training	94
18.	Purposes Served by Participation in Training	95
19.	Commitment to Training Format	97
20.	Responsibility for Training	98
21.	Pressing Needs of Parent Educators	99
22.	Improvements to Training	108
23.	General Comments	109

24. Significant Differences in Sources of Content Areas by Gender.....116
25. Significant Differences in Sources of Teaching Skills by Gender.....118
26. Significant Difference of Most Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training by Gender.....119
27. Significant Difference in the Basis of Selection of Parent Educators by Gender.....121
28. Significant Difference in Types of Participation in Training by Gender.....122
29. Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Gender.....123
30. Significant Difference in Level of Need for More Training by Gender.....124
31. Significant Difference in Commitment to Training Format by Gender.....125
32. Significant Differences in Sources of Content Areas by Highest Level of Schooling.....128
33. Significant Differences in Teaching Skills Essential to Preservice Training by Highest Level of Schooling.....129
34. Significant Difference in Commitment to Training Format by Highest Level of Schooling.....131
35. Significant Difference in Responsible Body for Training by Highest Level of Schooling.....132

36. Significant Difference in Source of Content Areas by Adequacy of Academic Preparation.....134
37. Significant Differences in Sources of Teaching Skills by Adequacy of Academic Preparation.....135
38. Significant Differences in Essential Content Areas by Adequacy of Academic Preparation.....137
39. Significant Difference in Source of Content Areas by Length of Service.....141
40. Significant Difference in Source of Teaching Skills by Length of Service.....143
41. Significant Differences in Participation in Training Approaches by Length of Service.....144
42. Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Length of Service.....145
43. Significant Differences in Purpose for Participation in Training by Length of Service.....146
44. Significant Differences in Essential Preservice Skills by Length of Service.....148
45. Significant Differences in Sources of Teaching Skills by Type of Parent Education.....151
46. Significant Sources of Content Areas by Type of Parent Education.....153
47. Significant Differences in Most Essential Content Areas by Type of Parent Educator.....155

48. Significant Differences in Basis of Selection of Parent Educators by Type of Parent Educator....156
49. Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Type of Parent Educator.....157
50. Significant Difference in Essential Content Areas for Preservice Training.....160
51. Significant Difference in Source of Teaching Skills by Primary Role.....161
52. Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Primary Role.....162
53. Significant Differences in Types of Commitment to Training by Primary Role.....163
54. Significant Difference in Responsible Body for Training by Primary Role.....164

CHAPTER 1

The Nature of the Study

Introduction

Throughout history and across cultures, parents have been educated in a broad sense to function as parents. Traditionally, parent education was accomplished in the home through informal processes in which each generation transmitted its experience to the next, enabling it to relive that experience and through it, to create modifications made necessary by the passage of time and changed circumstances.

Today there is a much different notion of parent education. Rapid societal change and mobility means the parenting knowledge traditionally gained via family members is more difficult to attain (Sasmor, 1979; Toffler, 1980; Lemasters, 1977; Fine, 1980). Isolation of parents from the traditional advice-giving of their own parents, grandparents and other relations who once lived within close proximity, has led parents to seek help with their parenting roles from professionals, literature and other parents (Haskins and Adams, 1983). While experiences are still being shared from one generation to the next, the methods of transmitting

parenting information have changed with organized parent education becoming necessarily more common.

One serious side effect of this isolated condition of modern life is stress, which adversely affects parents attempting to cope with the decline of traditional social support networks, role models and parenting advice (Hassid, 1978; Heinowitz, 1982). The stress of modern parenting due to family nuclearization, erosion of community, role differentiation and specialization, geographical distancing of family generations and the increased entry into the labour force have created a new reality in which parents can no longer benefit from traditional structures in their parenting roles. Harman and Brim (1980) call parent education a new type of support -- a mechanism made necessary by these social and economic realities. There is a need for this kind of structure within which parents can increase their understanding of the parenting role (Pickarts and Fargo, 1971; Elkins, 1976).

Helping modern parents to adjust to their role of parenting has placed a heavy burden on professionals and the various agencies which offer parent education. These agencies must meet the need for both quantity and quality of parenting education. A study conducted by the Edmonton Social Planning Council in 1982 identified

sixty-one agencies which offer parenting services. The study recommended that more parent education was needed. As well, the need for support for parent educators in terms of a centre for training, certification and ongoing support was a major finding of this report. A follow-up assessment of parenting services and programs by the Parenting Resources Committee, in 1986, discovered there are now more than 100 agencies providing some form of parent education but that there is no central, coordinating training program for parent educators.

The report on a conference entitled "Consultation on Parenting," held in Montreal in 1984, concluded that while there is no agreement on what constitutes family life and parent education, participants did concur that such programs are planned interventions which help individuals and families understand and deal with those issues which may be stress producing. While there is no consensus on the nature and quality of the programs provided, there is agreement that such programs perform a useful function for the individual, the family and the community. This would appear to be borne out by the fact that the programs are well attended and that in those programs where empirical testing has been conducted they are evaluated as highly successful in achieving their goals.

The conclusion also spoke to the need for development of a curriculum which would be recognized Canada wide for the training of family life and parent educators in order to assure the availability of qualified providers. There is no clear ownership of the parent education field by either a particular professional discipline or level of government. While lack of ownership allows for an interdisciplinary development and is considered a benefit, there is a lack of clarity in responsibility that leaves funding and certification open to a variety of interpretations (Family Service Association, 1984).

Background to the Problem

Parent education as a unique educational activity is often viewed as a necessary function but not as a distinct form of education. The development of training programs for parent educators is complicated by issues concerning parent education as a profession as well as issues concerning training itself: how training is accomplished, participants in training, and the content of training.

Many of the wide variations apparent in the training of parent educators are connected to the fact that parent education has not solidified into a self-contained profession. The lack of a single body of

professional literature accessible to educators and the absence of any professional body or association of parent educators has resulted in a situation in which there is little or no impetus or support for research (Harman and Brim, 1980). Constraints in research and development of training programs for parent educators are due in part to the attitude of some that parent education is "too private" or "too mundane" to be considered a viable form of educational activity (Smith et al., 1970: 151). This sentiment is reflected in the lack of degrees granted by universities or colleges specifically in the field of parent education. Pickarts and Fargo (1971) point out that while there are departments of Family and Child Development, Human Development and Home Economics which "touch importantly" upon the subject, however, there are few coordinated efforts to integrate the interdisciplinary knowledge related to the parent task, to teach the specific skills required to transmit this knowledge to parents in a usable fashion.

Without its own content and methodology, parent education has not developed a separately defined education profession of "parent educator" (Auervack, 1968; Lemasters, 1977; Fine, 1980). Harman and Brim (1980) note a tendency toward greater involvement of members of professional groups compared to parent

educators fifty years ago who were either family life educators or lay parent recruits. Parent educators today may be members of the medical profession, social workers, teachers, religious personnel or members of other helping professions as well as parents and lay leaders. Most parent educators owe their primary allegiance to one profession with their function as a parent educator happening as an ancillary service.

Need for the Study

Individuals and agencies who offer parenting services in Edmonton have expressed the need for establishing training programs for parent educators.

Changing societal support systems have led parents to look outside the home for parent education and support. The demands for parent education programs are not being met either in quantity or in quality in greater Edmonton. One major influence on parent education is the shortage of specially trained parent educators in Edmonton. Neither local colleges nor universities prepare educators to deal with this specialized field of adult education. Inservice training, while existent to a small extent, does not solve the problem of insufficient preservice training.

Through the wide range of activities labelled as parent education there is a distinct lack of program

planning, parent educator training or professional development. Since the demise of the Parent Resource Unit in 1982 due to funding constraints there has been no coordinated approach to the training of parent educators (Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1982). Parent educators are trained in agency-specific ways -- if they are trained at all.

The parental role must be viewed as adult education in whatever setting it takes place (Pickarts and Fargo, 1971). A philosophy of adult education which places final responsibility for determining the form and content of adult education on the learners also places a heavy responsibility on the leaders of adult education to provide maximum learning opportunities (Knowles, 1978; Smith et al., 1970).

The case for teacher training is established and no longer has to be argued in primary, secondary and much of further education. In general adult education, however, it is still often assumed by providers that expertise in a subject is adequate qualification for teaching it (Grabowski, 1976; Graham et al., 1982).

Parent educators who are trained in a way which attunes them to the differential learning processes of adults as well as the specifics of the course content are most successful in meeting the needs of the course participants. The quality of parent education

increases with the abilities of parent educators to lead to this form of education; the influence of teachers on the lives of pupils reflects to a great extent the professional training they have received (Cropley and Dave, 1978).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the training needs of parent educators in greater Edmonton and to identify alternatives to meet those needs. Since many parent educators function within the regulating policies of the agencies for whom they work, supervisors were also queried.

Identification of the clientele requiring training and an analysis of the skills needed for their activities were accomplished through a needs assessment by survey method.

The objectives of the study were:

1. To identify and gather demographic and professional data on parent educators;

2. To identify the content areas used by parent educators in Edmonton;

3. To identify the teaching skills used by parent educators in Edmonton;

4. To identify the training sources used by parent educators in Edmonton;

5. To identify the training needs of parent educators as perceived by parent educators and their immediate supervisors;

6. To ascertain the perceptions of parent educators regarding the delivery of parent educator training; and

7. To determine the relationships between selected demographic and professional charteristics and parent educators' perceptions of content areas, teaching skills, training sources, delivery alternatives and professional development needs.

These objectives served as the basis of the formation of the questionnaire items.

Definition of Terms

The terms preservice training, inservice training, parent education and prenatal education as used in the text of this study are defined as follows:

Preservice training -- that part of training which occurs prior to commencement of employment, also called orientation

Inservice training -- that training which updates the competence of teachers who are already employed, also called professional development

Parent education -- the educational process which influences and supports parental functioning including

the teaching of parenting to expectant parents, to parents who have children, to students of school age and to persons training as parent educators

Prenatal education -- parent education which occurs prior to the birth of a child.

Significance of the Study

As industrial society becomes more complex with traditional support systems changing, parents are looking to professionals for assistance in dealing with their role. In light of the value of preventative social services, the education received must be both effective and efficient. In order for this parent education to provide the utmost benefit to the parents, taxpayers and various agencies, the training must be of a high quality.

Practically, this study may:

1. Indicate specific skills and knowledge which are needed by an instructor in parent education;

2. Provide guidance for the development of more appropriate training programs;

3. Identify areas of parent educator training which require particular emphasis as well as those which may be of little value;

4. Point out practices and techniques which may be more effective in improving instruction;

5. Indicate how practical parent educator skills may best be developed;

6. Determine if experience, specialized training and education in the parent educator's background influences the perceived need for training;

7. Identify training needs of parent educators as perceived by their supervisors; and

8. Identify possible specifics which may hinder or facilitate the development of training programs in various agencies.

Information obtained from the survey will be used to formulate a set of guidelines to assist in the design of programs for the training of parent educators in Edmonton. These guidelines will benefit students contemplating teaching careers in parenting by providing a description of the preparation needed. The information regarding professional development will benefit those who are currently involved in parent education. Demographic and professional information will be of general interest to both parent educators and their supervisors. The information generated will be directly useful to any agency involved in parent education in facilitating preservice, inservice and professional development activities of parent educators.

This study may also contribute to the body of research in educational administration which deals with the training of parent educators. This study may fill a gap regarding the worth of parent educator training programs within and outside educational institutions and may be used as a base for further research in the general area of training for educators.

Delimitations of the Study

This descriptive study of the perceived need for training of parent educators was delimited to the Edmonton area. The sources of data for the study were delimited to a survey of parent educators who are currently employed in the Edmonton area. Effectiveness indicators were delimited to the perceptions of the participants of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The effectiveness of the study in identifying the training needs of parent educators was limited by reliance on a questionnaire as a means of data collection. The ability of the questionnaire to elicit these needs and the validity of questionnaire responses is a controversial issue in research (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982).

The study was limited due to a reliance on perceptions to gauge the training needs. It is generally recognized that perceptions are sometimes inaccurate and distorted.

This study was further limited by the return rate of the questionnaire. This rate poses a potential concern due to the high turnover of parent educators. Finally, the study was limited by the sampling procedures; generabilizability of the survey results to other geographic areas or training programs could only be made with caution.

Assumptions of the Study

It was assumed that:

1. The responses provided in the questionnaire were accurate statements of the subjects' perceptions of the situation; that they were impartial and honest; and,

2. The participants of the study were the most appropriate sources for the required data.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized in six chapters. Following the introductory first Chapter, a review of literature relevant to training of parent educators is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the

methodology used to develop the instrument, the identification of the sample and data collection procedures. The findings of the study are reported in Chapter 4, and an analysis of these findings is found in Chapter 5. Finally, the sixth Chapter presents the summary, conclusions and implications as well as suggestions for further research. A bibliography and appendices are included.

Summary

This chapter introduced a study which examined the needs for training of parent educators in greater Edmonton. Societal changes have led to the kind of structured parent education within which parents, out of necessity, develop their parenting role. The leaders of parent education often function in ancillary positions to their professions. Training for parent educators is not coordinated and is most often agency specific. Though the need for training for parent educators is not questioned, the lack of support, research and organization of a professional association of parent educators means that training programs have not evolved. Individuals and agencies who offer parenting services in Edmonton have expressed the need for the establishment of training programs for parent educators.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

In general, parent education is concerned with anything related to parental care. This comprehensive subject encompasses those preparing for parenthood, parenting information for the school age students, and those being trained to work with parent education (Kerckhoff et al., 1976). Parenting, the knowledge, attitudes and practices directing people in their roles and functions as parents, constitutes the substance of parent education, and an attempt to assist parents in the performance of their parenting responsibilities constitutes its purpose.

Parent education has a vast scope, varied methods and sometimes undifferentiated goals. This presents an obvious difficulty in defining areas of agreement among the experts in the field of parent-child relations, and within several schools of thought there is little agreement (Stern, 1960; Pickarts and Fargo, 1971).

One author maintains that since there is no well-established or generally accepted body of factual knowledge regarding parent-child relations, parent

education should be viewed as a changing of attitudes (Hereford, 1963). If parent education is only viewed as the mere transmission of factual information, then a well-written, interesting, and accurate pamphlet might serve the purpose. Others believe that parent education is a form of adult education, that programs are made up of classes, that leaders are teachers, educators and facilitators and that they are proficient in the methodology of teaching (Knowles, 1978; Stein, 1980).

Among these authors is support for the idea that parent education is most importantly a part of adult education (Pickarts and Fargo, 1971; Verduin, 1978; Verner and Davison, 1971). Parents learning the role of parenting need the opportunity to systematically acquire this learning. Parent education classes seek to reach parents in a way more sharply defined within the larger framework of adult education. Thus, the nature of how adults learn, and the current thinking in the field of adult education, become as pertinent as the content areas; the process of education becomes as important as the content areas in the training of parent educators.

Harman and Brim (1980) speak in detail of the issues pertaining to the selection and training of personnel in parent education by showing the extent of

disparities regarding both concepts and practices. They contend that the range of parent educators illustrates the diversity which represents different contents and approaches, and certainly different preparation for their parent educator roles.

The difficulty in training parent educators is connected to the wide range of parent educators who function in an ancillary position to another role. Most parent educators who function in a subordinate position to their main role do so without the benefit of a professional organization. A great variety of parent educators are involved in parent education, including family life educators, clinical personnel, nurses, teachers, home economists, clergymen and parents. There does not exist a self-contained profession which can embrace this diversified group. The absence of a single professional body results in a paucity of professional literature or research which could serve as the basis for development of training programs or standardized certification requirements.

In this chapter, the parameters of the study are clarified through discussion of the issues pertaining to the training of parent educators. The literature was searched for the historical basis for the current state of training. The types and selection of parent educators and their training needs are presented. This

chapter discusses the content of training as well as both the reasons that parent educators have for participating in training and the reasons they have for not participating in training. The results of this search provided the basis for the development of a survey of the training needs of parent educators in greater Edmonton.

Historical Overview

The issue of how best to train instructors has been discussed at length, but inconclusively, not only in the literature speaking directly to parent education but also in that literature which touches importantly upon parent education -- that of family life education and adult education.

While parent education includes the substance of family life education and the process of adult education, the training for either is insufficient for parent educators (Harman and Brim, 1980). Indeed, this problem underlies one of the issues pertaining to the training of parent educators which the literature reveals: if training is accomplished within one of these areas, will the training stress content or process? This issue, then, presents itself in the argument that only highly qualified "experts" with responsible experience in the field should undertake

parent education. Even in the situation where there are professionally trained group leaders or volunteers, Harman and Brim (1980) point out a double distinction: there are group leaders with knowledge of substance as opposed to knowledge of method, and there are professionally trained group leaders as opposed to those with no particular knowledge or training for the task. This points out the differences among parent educators who are expert in content areas or in the educational process and those claiming neither area of proficiency.

Historically, this issue concerning lay parent educators arose 100 years ago when health societies in England discussed whether trained nurses or volunteer women from the neighbourhood should go into homes to spread the gospel of health knowledge (Stern, 1960). The issue presented itself again in American parent education in the 1930s, and once more since the 1960s, as large numbers of small discussion groups became so popular that the demand for leaders was greater than that which could be supplied by professionally qualified workers (Auerbach, 1968). In 19th century England, volunteers were gradually replaced by trained health professionals; but in recent years, the volunteer worker has again become necessary and accepted.

Harman and Brim (1980) categorize parent education into large areas descriptive of the methods or processes of parent education: mass, group and individual. Mass mode defines parent education which happens through mass media presentations, the individual mode describes a form of parent education which mainly involves counselling, while the group mode is delineated as one leader working with a number of students. It is within the last two decades that systematic approaches of parent education have emerged as distinct from the individual mode of parent or family therapy (Fine,1980). While the scope of parent education includes all aspects of child growth and development, in this study it focuses predominantly upon an adult clientele involved in a form of the group mode described by Harman and Brim (1980).

The group mode lends itself to a manageable discussion of parent educators and their training needs. This description of parent education programs as a group mode is expanded upon in The Parent Resource Unit Training Manual (1982: 156): "a parent education program refers to systematically and conceptually based programs, intended to impart information, awareness, or skills to participants on aspects of parenting." It has features such as a curriculum and objectives, a definite beginning and ending time, sessions which

build on the knowledge, skills and awareness imparted in a previous session and which lasts an extended period of time.

It should be noted that the group mode which defines a category of parent education is different from the method teaching called group discussion. This is an important distinction because to many parent educators group discussion was traditionally the dominant method of parent education (Auerbach, 1968; Hereford, 1963).

While there is some thought that discussion groups are more common to liberal adult education than to other types of education, the case for discussion has been advanced based on the idea that adults have had more experience than children and therefore the essential element of adult education is the sharing of experience. This view says that if the best way for adults to interact is by discussion then discussion is the best method to use in all circumstances (Houle, 1972; Dickson, 1973). The other side counters that group discussion is but one method of educating adults (Lowy,1955).

Types of Parent Educators

The characteristics of the leaders of group modes of parent educators are described in the literature as

specialists in parent education, professional leaders, trained leaders and untrained volunteers (Harman and Brim, 1980).

Specialists in Parent Education

Specialists in parent education are trained professional leaders who combine both professional training such as medicine, psychology, physio-therapy or social work, with special preparation for parenting group leadership (Harman and Brim, 1980). It was suggested that they might need additional training in psychology, and the practical aspects of group leadership. Pickarts and Fargo (1971) note that this specialist has the advantage of a strong interest in his own particular speciality. Rather than denying that this advantage affects group process and content, it should be recognized as making one content area richer than others.

Professional Leaders

Professional leaders according to Harman and Brim (1980) are members of a particular profession which has professional contact with children and families: teachers, nurses, medical practitioners, psychologists, youth leaders, clergy and police. These leaders require special emphasis on family and parenthood in

initial training (Stern, 1971). Though these professional leaders may have expertise in subject matter, it is unlikely that they will have thought through the appropriateness of content, developed a philosophy, incorporated goals and values related to a program, considered techniques and methods or their suitability in a parent education setting. It is unlikely that these professionals will have had the opportunity to observe or practise in a specifially parent education-oriented program (Pickarts and Fargo, 1971).

Trained Leaders

As parent education became more formalized, it became obvious that the teacher played a major role in affecting the nature of the educational experience. The effectiveness of the process as well as the final accomplishment meant that leadership skills became important. Trained leaders came with little expertise in subject matter (Harman and Brim, 1980). They could volunteer as group leaders who work along with a professional so as to combine specialist knowledge with the advantage of voluntary effort, personal experience and local initiative (Stern 1971).

Untrained Volunteers

Harman and Brim (1980) note that there is one group of parent educators in which the parent educators are also parents. Many of these parents engage in such activities without benefit of any formal training, however abbreviated. With the lack of any requirements of training, many of the parents who serve as parent educators have no preparation other than their own experiences as parents. The issue of untrained volunteers leading groups is a major issue in the literature.

Proponents of untrained volunteers leading groups contend that these volunteers bring the personal experience of parenthood to parent education. Yet there is an obvious danger to this, counter Pickarts and Fargo (1971). Common sense and experience are important, but when unsupported by sound knowledge and leadership skills they could lead to a situation which may not only be harmful but may lead to a discrediting of parent education. Having a lay leader with no more knowledge than group members makes for interaction, but perhaps not education. Self-education can take place in such a process of course, but it is different from parent education taught by a knowledgeable, trained, professional parent educator. Berman (1985) and Pearson (1985) note that these parents who become

involved in teaching (particularly in relation to prenatal education) are termed "lay people."

Unfortunately, a systematic survey of parents as parent educators has not been conducted and there is no indication who are the parents entering such activities in terms of their backgrounds and prior training. Nor is it possible to establish how many are trained. Instead, we are limited to noting the existence of some training activites and the general nature of those without being able to comment on their outreach or efficacy (Harman and Brim, 1980).

Adult Educators

Adult educators are special kinds of teachers who know how adults learn, and based on this knowledge are able to create a positive climate for learning (Graham et al., 1982). Parent educators appear to share many similarities with adult educators in relation to their type of employment and their lack of training. To study the education of adults, as with parent educators, it is necessary to examine the career patterns of people at work in many institutions. There seems to be such great variation in scope and purpose that generalizations about the basic concerns of the total field of adult education are difficult (Smith et al., 1970).

Two authors who describe adult educators using models and groupings are Houle (1978) and Hewitson (1979). Houle's (1978) description of adult educators places them within a three level pyramid shape according to their specializations and reporting relationships. Divided horizontally, the base consists of volunteers, the largest group of adult education personnel. In the middle group Houle identifies those people who, as part of their paid employment, combine adult education with other responsibilities. The top of this pyramid contains the smallest group of full-time specialists with primary concerns and occupations in adult education.

Hewitson (1979) separates adult educators into two groups -- professionals and paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals work under the direction of a professional in providing services directly to the client. The paraprofessional either does not have professional credentials or does not want to assume the role of a professional. The movement to employ paraprofessionals as part-time educators arose from the lack of training for adult educators. Many parent educators, by virtue of their work circumstances, are similar to Hewitson's description of paraprofessionals and Houle's middle level in the pyramid shape.

In an analysis of adult leadership, Smith et al. (1970) found that adult educators require mastery of content and instructional techniques. However, no set of competencies has yet been defined which if universally accepted would guarantee effective educator performance (Sharp, 1976; Smith et al., 1970; Graham et al., 1982).

Volunteers and part-time adult educators are largely self-taught, acquiring their skill and expertise through on-the-job learning. Whatever training in adult education they receive is acquired during in-service training (Gabrowski, 1981).

Family Life Educators

Lowy (1955) characterizes this group of parent educators within the framework of family life education. Participants in family life education learn about child growth and development through participation in group processes. The parent educator then is a leader of a group. As such the knowledge of the dynamics of individual behavior and interelations of people in groups and of child development is employed. The emphasis on these parent educators is upon their role as leaders who help parents to share their thinking and feeling about common problems, to examine the meaning of their common experiences and to

build upon their inner strengths as they take on a more integrated parental role.

Group discussion is a major part of the process of family life education. The training of parent educators emphasizes group leadership. Family life education constitutes the only professional group primarily training persons for careers in family life education of which parent education is a major component. Unfortunately, most family life educators are primarily instructors in junior and senior high schools, and secondarily instructors in adult education programs (Harman and Brim, 1980; Figley, 1976; Fohlin, 1971; Somerville, 1970; Singer, 1969).

Selection of Parent Educators

As a result of a study of 1800 part-time adult educators, Graham et al. (1982) found that recruitment of adult educators was usually informal and based on several possiblities. Some adult educators responded to an advertisement or were students who took over from their teacher. Others were approached to teach because of their apparent skill. Still others were involved in a teacher training course and were invited to teach.

The basis of selection of parent educators varies, with authors suggesting that characteristics in the applicants such as the motivation to teach, a

recognition of the need for training or an expression of positive pleasure at the prospect of partipating in a training program (Graham et al., 1982; Knowles, 1970). This variety in selection, says Knowles (1970), places a heavy burden on a conscientious adult education administrator to be more creative and industrious than is typically required of other education administrators in the selection, training and supervision of teachers and leaders.

Family life educators suggest that tact, sensitivity, and self-insight will be important criteria upon which to base selection of leaders (Fohlin, 1971). Stern (1960) suggests practical experience and sympathy for children, ability to inspire confidence in parents, mature personality and necessary intellectual capacity to absorb and interpret ideas. Pearson (1985) wonders if a parent educator who teaches expectant parents should be a parent or a woman. Hereford (1963) found that selection is necessarily dependent upon the setting of parent education. In one of his groups, for instance, it was found that the most successful leader was one who shared similar ethnic backgrounds with his group.

Some authors are quite adamant that parent educators must have specific backgrounds. Stern (1960) and Auerbach (1968) see all parent educators as mental

health personnel; Donnelly (1973), Rothenberg (1981), and Berman (1985) see parent educators as parents; and Hassid (1978) and Sasmor (1979) say that parent educators should be nurses.

Kidd (1979) hesitates to list personal qualifications, insisting that there are no safe guidelines which can be given about the qualifications of lay leaders in particular. There is considerable doubt about the practical value of any list of traits, either about reaching agreement on the items in the list, or learning about the candidates from it. Such a list, he argues, might reveal more about the list-maker than about the subject.

The Current State of Training

The multiplicity in the types of parent educators, and in the desired characteristics and traits needed to be a parent educator are not as problematic in the discussion of the current state of training of parent educators. Generally, parent educators can identify several training approaches and four training sources: academic training, preservice training, inservice training and self-directed study.

Training Approaches

The training approaches which are common for parent educators include conferences and workshops, college and university credit courses, other non-credit courses, and local meetings of parent educators. Self-directed study is a training approach which because of overlap with training sources is discussed in this section.

Parent education conferences and workshops. There are groups of educators, parent and prenatal in particular, who have banded together, some with the assistance of knowledgeable professionals, some without any support, to offer information in the form of conferences, workshops and training to other women. These groups for childbirth education eventually consolidated into federations of groups known as the International Childbirth Education Association, Childbirth Without Pain and the Association for Psychoprophylaxis in Obstetrics (Bradner,1978; Berman,1985). It is apparent that many community groups which employ lay educators make an effort to provide strenuous preservice training. Training manuals for the community parent educators propose up to two years of preservice training, including written or oral exams, and attendence at workshops or lectures. Some of the literature only slightly conceals the

concern of medical personnel that lay people are involved in parent education (Sasmor, 1979; Hassid, 1978). This could account for the care taken by many of these community groups to adequately orient their personnel.

Other non-credit courses and workshops. Training programs of The Child Study Association of America are conducted for the preparation of social workers and public health nurses in the parent education group process. Unfortunately, as Pickarts and Fargo (1971) note, these programs are limited in number. The training responsibility has been that of subject field supervisors. In the Los Angeles City Schools, persons with a professional background and with a body of knowledge are chosen through highly subjective judgments. The informal training program consists of internship or practise teaching with opportunities for the trainee to assume portions of the actual practise under the supervision of an experienced teacher. In addition either before or within the first two years of work, the teacher is required to take four units of course work in methods and materials and in the philosophy of adult education.

A similar project was described by Hereford (1963). The training workshops followed a pattern of learning through experience over a series of six weekly

sessions and included discussion techniques learned through observation and participation. There was a manual for discussion of leadership.

An "Enable" project developed by Family Service Association of America is typical of the training accomplished for group leaders. The training programs stress working cooperatively with other agencies so as to have wide community involvement. This project trained persons in parent group leadership to become trainers of others with the emphasis placed on consultation and supervision in helping people develop new group skills (Auerbach, 1968).

The Family Life Education Council of Edmonton has recently begun a leadership training program with an emphasis on personal growth, communication skills, leadership styles, group process and workshop design. It is designed primarily to fulfill the internal needs of The Family Life Education Council for trained leaders but also trains some group leaders from the community.

Local meetings of parent educators. Graham et al. (1982) stress that the importance of local meetings should not be underestimated when compared to more formal approaches to training. Morale is maintained and the sense of isolation is broken down for those educators who are employed part-time. Interest in the

subject and being kept current with developments in the area are advantages of these meetings.

Two local meetings are those of The Edmonton Area Birth Educators and The Parenting Resources Committee. Both provide monthy activities through which parent educators can experience a sense of community and identity. Participation in these groups is for some parent educators their only form of support and ongoing professional development.

College or university credit courses. The literature hints at comprehensive and well-planned courses of study for the preparation of parent educators at a university or community college. The Institute of Child Study in Toronto provides training at two levels: as an option in the graduate diploma course and as a two year part-time course for lay leaders (Stern,1960). The University of Hawaii and Seattle Community College, according to Pickarts and Fargo (1971), are actively engaged in the process of developing degree programs to train parent educators. The initial delineation of such a degree program includes a four semester training sequence which integrates the substance of many disciplines into parent education theory and practical application. The agency at which the parent educator was employed would

then carry the responsibility for inservice education and staff development.

Training Sources

The acquisition of the information and teaching skill which parent educators use is originally accessed from the four main sources of academic education, preservice training, inservice training and self-directed study.

Academic training. Since many parent educators accomplish their role as a minor part of their career, the training through their academic education is of importance. Many nurses, social workers and other professionals claim to have acquired the content of parent education during the time of academic study for their job. So, a nurse who has a University degree in nursing may consider the knowledge gained through a University-level program sufficient to teach parent education.

Many competency-based training programs acknowledge that knowledge about a particular subject is no guarantee of the attainment of lesson objectives as far as pupils are concerned (Hewitson, 1979). It is unlikely that an academic education would prepare the parent educator to think through the appropriateness of content, develop a philosophy incorporating goals and

values related to a program or consider techinques and methods suitable to a parent education setting.

Preservice training. The selection of educators is only the first step in producing a good educator. Selection recognizes the trainees' prior learning through formal and informal means, but even the best instructor cannot perform unless he has been properly oriented to the program (Knowles, 1970). He should understand the program objectives, its philosophy of education, its methods and exactly where he fits into the organization as a parent educator. Preservice training or orientation is that part of training which occurs prior to work commencement and is often seen as a prerequisite for certification, yet is stressed as being only the first stage in a continuous process of professional development (Hewitson, 1979; Sharp, 1976; Goad, 1984; Knowles, 1970).

Preservice training of parent educators is normally the mutual responsibility of the applicant and the employing agency. Some of the methods which orient parent educators to their role include a time of observation or participation in classes, directed self-study of appropriate materials, attendance at faculty meetings, and individual conferences between a supervisor and the trainee (Knowles, 1978). Participation in preservice training is often

determined on an individual basis which depends on the applicants' background and needs. Sometimes preservice training is nonexistent, especially in the cases of health personnel who teach in public health or hospital settings. The reason for this is because it is assumed that such persons have acquired the content knowledge from their acadmic education. This is in contrast to the preservice training provided for lay teachers who have no medical background and who are provided with a strenuous preservice program (Pearson, 1985; Elkins, 1976).

Inservice training. Inservice training is often seen as training which enhances the qualifications of educators who originally entered the profession with low qualifications, possibly with nonexistent training, who returned to teaching after an absence, or who require training which provides updated professional information (Cropley and Dave, 1978). Inservice training is also seen as part of a teacher's professional responsibility (Effraiff and Meshover, 1981).

Much of the literature supports a continuity between preservice and inservice training (Rubin, 1971; Harris et al., 1969; Graham et al. 1982). These authors perceive training as lifelong education with no sharp divisions between forms of training. Inservice

is usually distinct from preservice training simply by the time and sequence.

Various approaches to training include conferences held by local, national or international groups on subjects of interest to parent educators or educators in general, credit and non-credit courses held through universities and colleges or by such organizations as nursing associations, and meetings of local groups. Inservice training takes the form of support for educators on an ongoing basis (Knowles, 1970; Rubin, 1971). Harman and Brim (1980) see this kind of training as a vehicle through which interagency cooperation can happen. Oliver (1977) suggests that inservice prepares teachers to accept change and to carry through change. The sharing among colleagues of up-to-date knowledge, skills and attitudes is one that Gibbs (1980) sees as a purpose of inservice training.

Self-directed study. Self-directed study is a type of informal training which addresses identified needs of the individual. While this is the most pervasive form of training common to all educators and often a requirement for many of the lay parent educators, it is undertaken with varying degrees of thoroughness and continuity (Graham et al., 1982). Much of the learning accomplished by educators is by trial and error, adopting certain practises and

modifying them as a result of reflection about the results achieved. Studying books, pamphlets or manuals, attending meetings, asking for supervisory assistance, or observing other programs are some of the ways adult educators direct their own training (Smith et al., 1970).

Individuals need to be motivated to and have a responsibility for maintaining currency and accuracy in their teaching. This may be accomplished through practice, journal reading, use of other library facilities, attending pertinent seminars and courses and by being involved in professional activities (Gibbs, 1980).

Another form of self-directed study has been met through books which have been written specifically to help the part-time educator to function in the field of adult education (Dickinson, 1973; Draves, 1984; Renner, 1983). These books are targeted to that group of adult educators who are lacking the academic knowledge or who have neither the time nor the opportunity to participate in a more comprehensive training program. Presented are general principles which could be applicable to a wide range of adult education instructional settings. Other manuals are specific to parent education and include information for those lacking in either or both of content or process

(Hassid, 1978; Kitzinger, 1977; Malinowski, 1983; Perkins, 1985). In particular, they can assist adult educators to improve their professional behavior in a classroom, course planning, and instructional techniques. Some books such as that written by Renner (1983) provide adult educators with the opportunity of a programmed learning approach to training.

Training Needs

Training is that part of the professional field of adult education which focuses upon the role performance of persons in organization systems (Verduin,1978; Verner and Davison,1971). This section speaks to general training needs, the content of training, participation of parent educators in training and barriers to training.

Training is enhanced by the performance and the involvement of the trainee. The key to successful training of adult educators lies in organization and planning. This means providing not just "instructional recipes," but developing basic principles needed to guide educators in selecting particular methods to assist the adult learner (Verduin, 1978; Verner and Davison, 1971).

Training programs are most likely to be effective if they are planned systematically, and if they are

offered in a logical pattern. Successful training programs proceed from identification of the problem, a statement of needs and objectives through definition of content, planning and choice of methods and resources to the execution of training, and end with assessment, follow-up and evaluation (Elsdon, 1975; Mallory, 1982). Training programs are most effective when a mutually supportive learning group is available. Lectures, seminars, tutorials, guided discussion, or visits of observation are forms of training which have proven successful (Elsdon, 1975). An informal training style, which involves trainees in the training process, encourages not only a sharing of past experiences, opinions, question and positions of the trainees, but it also helps to identify trainee feelings, attitudes and emotions. The importance of an atmosphere where mutual and constructive criticism can become a natural part of the training program has been widely acknowledged where the process of training is congruent with the content (Graham et al., 1982; Pickarts and Fargo, 1971; Candy, 1980; Grabowski, 1976).

The Content of Training

The training needs of adult educators are directed toward two general forms of expertise: the content to be conveyed, and the teaching skills required in a

particular setting to achieve the desired objectives (Smith et al., 1970). The interrelation of content and process is important -- group skills alone can accomplish very little unless they are directed toward an identified area of knowledge. However rich their own background of information and understanding of the subject areas to be discussed, the content is useless without the process skills. Field-work experience brought home to all trainees their need for thorough familiarity with both aspects of the program, content and methodology (Auerbach, 1968). There is also a need for educators to receive some aid in determining a philosophy of parent education.

Content

Whether the parent educator is a professional in some aspect of parent education or not, Gibbs (1980) emphasizes the importance of developing a good knowledge of the subject. Since most parent educators pursue their role of parent educator in an ancilliary position to their major profession, it is likely that they have acquired some of the content knowledge through the academic education for their primary role. Training accomplished through inservice education, in this case, will include an updating of the content knowledge for the adult educator.

The content of a parent educator's training may be drawn from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, medicine, nursing and social work (Harman and Brim, 1980). Since parent education covers such a comprehensive field, careful attention must be given to the selection of the content of training programs. In the absence of absolute, scientific answers to questions about human relationships, Hereford (1963) suggests that a climate which stimulates the process of individual choice is more important than specific content. Without a "body of factual information having universal applicability" the emphasis should be on an educational program for parents which allows individual growth and self-development. The training for educators would then lie in facilitating the group process.

Much of the literature about the content of parent education begins with a qualifying statement, "If the goal of parent education is . . . then the content should be . . . ." (Hereford, 1963). Each author then asserts his view about the content of parent education. The end result appears to be a deemphasis on specific content both in parent education and in the training of parent educators. Others are quite adamant that there are specific needs of parents which could be included in the content of a training program for parent

educators. Pickarts and Fargo (1971) include such content as the variability of parenting patterns, the effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on attitudes, values, behaviours and skills, an understanding of the community's role in meeting needs of the individual, and the ways of connecting these needs to those of the family.

There are cross-cultural attempts as well to deal with this broad topic, as Stern (1960) discovered in an international survey of parent education. In the countries discussed, parent educators functioned within the existing framework of education, social and health services, with the content and process of parent education being adjusted according to the needs of the community. For instance, schools for parents in German-speaking Switzerland have been modelled on the German schools for mothers, but unlike these, they exclude housecraft teaching, not because it is regarded as unimportant, but because in Switzerland it is already taken care of by other institutions. Stern cautions that while it may be convenient to replicate the training programs from another country, the transfer of information is not possible without some adjustment for differences in culture.

While there is little consensus on the content knowledge for parent educators, there is general

agreement that certain areas of knowledge are important. Harman and Brim (1980) recommend an often quoted list of content areas that come from a specially-appointed committee on Education Standards and Certification of Family Life Educators: the family as an institution, family interaction, marriage preparation, human development, biological sciences, human sexuality, family resources, group process, communication, field experiences, counselling, research laws regarding marriage and the family, and community resources. Other authors suggest topics such as emotional aspects of family life, variations of family circumstances such as foster care, adoption, mental abnormality or exceptional ability, and misconceptions about heredity and discipline (Stern, 1960; Kerckhoff et al., 1976; Pickarts and Fargo, 1971). Auerbach (1968) stresses the psychological background of family life and personal development at every stage. Pearson, and Milinaire (1974) advocate training in consumer advocacy, medication and breathing techniques for labour.

The Parent Education Division of the Department of Child Development and Family Life at Purdue University (Kerchoff et al., 1976) in attempting to answer questions about training of parent educators who work in high schools, colleges, and communities surveyed

seventy-five colleges and universities. Responses showed a common need among the participants for two different kinds of materials. The major need was for materials directed primarily at the parenting process, materials which focus on parental roles, effects of children on the marital relationship, methods for effective guidance and discipline, and particularly for helpful information for the one-parent family. A secondary need was for professional development material for the professional parent educator.

The literature which specifically addresses the training of the parent educator who teaches expectant parents lists the content areas of pregnancy, labour and delivery, and postpartum emotional and psychological aspects of pregnancy, childbirth, the care of the new baby and the problems of parents in caring for and rearing young children (Pearson, 1984; Kitzinger, 1977; Malinowski, 1983; Sasmor, 1979; Elkins, 1976).

Methods

Teaching skills are variable says Houle (1972) because most adult education activities are not based on a teaching profession whose members have been trained for their work or whose competence is certified by some authority. Even when members of an educational

profession can be used, they often need special training for their work with adults.

Few parent educators acquired any formal training in how to teach skills (Knowles, 1970). Most people recruited to teach adults, if left on their own, would teach as they were taught -- according to the principles and practises of pedagogy. Draves (1984) and Houle (1972) emphasize the different kind of teacher needed to lead a class of adults. Instructional techniques might include the planning for use of curriculm material, and resource personnel as well as skills in assessing pupil progress. These and other skills related to instruction, class discipline, interaction evaluation and self-analysis are seen as important for parent educators (Hewitson, 1979; Verner, 1971).

Pickarts and Fargo (1971) point out that parent educators should be trained in the use and interpretation of research findings. The integration of new information, with individualized teaching and evaluation techniques are important teaching skills. More practical skills include the use of well prepared chalk boards, flip charts, overhead projectors, films and handouts (Gibb, 1980; Perkins, 1980).

In a perfect world no one would be allowed to teach without some preliminary training accompanied by

supervised practise (Grabowski, 1976). Training should include learning experiences in which trainees assume the role they will play once they have successfully completed their training -- that of teachers (Elsdon, 1975). Parent educators should have the opportunity to observe and practise in a parent education program. Such experience would help to link theory to practice, thus providing the trainee with an opportunity to discover what it is like to be a teacher. Sometimes simulation, role playing, case studies, and microteaching could take the place of direct student contact (Cropley and Dave, 1978; Feldman, 1982; Goad, 1984; Elsdon, 1975).

Philosophy

Since the total learning experience will be influenced not only by the teacher's content knowledge and teaching skills, but also by his basic philosophy and goals, it is important that these also be included in a training program for parent educators (Pickarts and Fargo, 1971). Malinowski (1983) notes that nurses must examine their attitudes toward not only the content they are teaching, but also toward the policies and routines of their health care facility. Two other nurses (Perkins, 1980, and Gibbs, 1980) believe that those who have training as nurses may have some

unlearning to do before they are able to respond to parents' educational needs. They also believe that good teaching means being able to find out information, not having all the answers and being able to make mistakes. There should be an understanding of and a commitment to the goals and principles of education: the social process of education, including active participation and motivation. Hereford (1963) sees that applicants unsympathetic with the basic philosophy of the training program would drop out if their philosophy differed.

Participation in Training

There are a variety of reasons for partipation in training programs one of the most obvious is that training enhances the effectivess of an educator. Generally, the training in which parent educators participate serves the purposes of the educators involved.

Educators without training exhibit a variety of weaknesses encompassing attitudes such as: a tendency to look back on their most recent educational experience as a guide to their future activities in the teaching situation; a concentric attitude to the subject which they are teaching; and a narrowness of methodological approach (Grabowski, 1981). An

underestimation of the motivation and aspiration of their students coupled with an inability to cope with the life and order of the institution common to untrained educators leads to a demoralizing lack of personal confidence in their own ability as teachers (Graham et al., 1982; Smith et al., 1970).

Graham et al. (1982) emphasize the effect of training in maintaining morale and breaking down the sense of isolation felt by many people who are employed part-time teachers. Training activities help educators to experience a sense of community and identity. A study by The Edmonton Social Planning Council (1982) found that the training of parent educators ultimately enhances the quality of parent education. As the numbers of parent educators being trained increases, the number of parenting programs for parents also increases.

Barriers to Training

As valuable as training may be to an educator there are several reasons which serve as barriers to participation in training. Among these obstacles is the lack of research about parent education.

Adult education shares with parent education the lack of research which has left gaps in evaluation and publication about training programs (Pickarts and

Fargo, 1971; Knowles, 1970; Grabowski, 1981; Goad, 1984). While there is widespread agreement within the literature at a philosophical level that the quality of teaching can be enhanced by the systematic study and mastery of certain basic concepts and skills, there is little agreement as to how to recognize effective teaching, what constitutes effective teaching, nor how to make training effective. Both these fields are described as "emerging" (Grabowski, 1976; Harman and Brim, 1980).

That adult educators and parent educators have some professional expertise has led to the belief that any additional training is unnecessary. Many medical professionals feel that their academic backgrounds are sufficient (Sasmor, 1979; Hassid, 1978; Gibbs, 1980). This belief is also common to other professionals. Some of these professionals worked with younger learners, and then considered themselves equipped to teach students of all ages (Graham et al., 1982). Grabowski (1976) finds fault with teacher training because it not only fails to account for academic backgrounds but also ignores personal predispositions and significant informal preparation of educators. The barrier to training appears when situation-specific information is necessary, but the training program does

not acknowledge and adjust the program to suit the needs of the trainees.

The results of studies by Gabrowski (1976) and Graham et al. (1982) show that educators have personal reasons for not participating in training: pressure of time in home and job, and lack of a perceived need for training. Some educators do not participate in training because it is often carried on at an intellectual level and does not allow input from trainees. The great majority of teachers of adults work partially in the field of adult education. To some then, their commitment seems too slight to make training worth their while (Graham et al., 1982).

Changes and all that change implies would also be needed in the administration and organization of the teacher-training institutions themselves. The stress of change as well as practical adjustments are seen as barriers by Cropley and Dave (1978). For example, time-tabling would have to be adjusted to permit different kinds of learning activities and facilities would be needed for individual and group learning. Indeed, relationships with agencies outside the institutes might have to be changed, and staff attitudes and values would need to be favourable toward lifelong education.

Summary

Historically and currently, parent education is seen to be a victim of varying opinions and practices. Parent education, with its varying methods and content areas, lends itself to much discussion. Characteristics of parent educators, the kinds of training available, and their participation in training have all been affected by the lack of definitive boundaries on parent educuation. The training of parent educators, while an evolving need, has not been supported by any organized body of parent education. The absence of a system which would develop, administer and evaluate parent educator training programs has influenced the state of parent education and consequently the training of parent educators.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

The research methodology of the study is discussed in this chapter. The discussion includes an overview of the questionnaire, development of the study instrument and the identification of the sample. Data collection procedures and analysis of the data are also described.

The Questionnaire

Information concerning demographic profiles and training needs of key informants was obtained through a mailed questionnaire (Appendix A). This method of data collection was considered to be the most practical means of reaching as many parent educators as possible in greater Edmonton in the winter of 1986 (Neuber, 1980). Other practical reasons, which included both the cost and time efficiency, led to the choice of a mailed questionnaire over the personal interview method. While the interview method has the advantage of a high response rate, respect for the confidentiality of the participants in a mailed questionnaire was more important for this study (GMCC

Applied Research Report, 1984). Since many respondents were colleagues of the researcher and much of the questionnaire was of a personal or sensitive nature, respondent anonymity was protected. Further, because the researcher was not present during completion of a mailed questionnaire, the possibility of researcher bias was reduced (Winton, 1974).

Attempts were made to overcome serious disadvantages of the mailed questionnaire which would affect this study -- the low rate of return and the inability of the researcher to check the responses given (Mannheim, 1977). In anticipation of the low response rate, efforts were made to impress the respondents with the importance of returning the completed questionnaire. The questionnaire was revised to minimize misunderstanding and respondents were invited in the covering letter to contact the researcher with questions (Appendix B). It was also anticipated that with "specialized populations," that is, those known to be interested or involved in special subject matters such as parent educators, the response rates may have run very high (Mannheim, 1977).

Development of the Instrument

The study was designed to describe opportunities for parent educators to evaluate their present training

and to obtain information which would facilitate the formation of guidelines for teacher preparation in parent education. Existing questionnaires lacked the particular items necessary to collect the information; therefore, a new instrument was designed. Literature concerning the training needs for parent and adult educators was reviewed, a variety of research instruments was studied, and instructional method books were consulted prior to the construction of the first questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by adapting and augmenting the existing instruments developed by Konrad (1977), Evenson (1973) and Weleschuck (1977). These were found to be particularly useful references for questionnaire format, lists of teaching techniques used by educators, and content areas of parent education.

The questionnaire was designed to access information about the training needs of parent educators through five areas: background, content areas of parent education, teaching skills for parent educators, training of parent educators and professional development of parent educators. The format used both open-ended and closed items. When closed-ended questions were used to make the task of answering the questionnaire more straightforward and less demanding for the respondent, the answer category

of "other" was included to encourage comments. This "other" category was included in the identification of types of parent education, types of teaching skills, participation in training, and those responsible for training. In those cases where it was important to have the respondents express themselves in their own words or in cases where exhaustive lists of answers were impossible, open-ended questions were used to obtain information.

Background

Respondents were surveyed as to their age, gender, highest level of schooling, adequacy of academic preparation, length of service, type of parent education taught and their primary role.

Two of the six age categories from which respondents could indicate their present age were "under 25" and "60 plus." The other age categories available as choices covered the years from twenty-five to fifty-nine. Since parent educators may have had a wide range of schooling, they were asked to identify their highest level of education from seven levels of schooling from high school, technical training and college to university graduate degree.

The adequacy of their academic training as preparation for their role of parent educator was

determined through choices on a five-point scale. The range was from a very low adequacy as "1" and a very high adequacy choice available as "5." A determination of the length of service as parent educators was made by asking respondents to choose from four categories. As parent education is an area which is not well established in Edmonton, the categories were from "less than one year" to "5 or more years" plus the choices of "1-2 years" and "3-4 years." Similarly, parent educators often teach more than one kind of parent education, so they were asked to identify all of four common kinds of teaching in which they were involved: prenatal (parents who are pregnant), parent (parents who have children), family life (students of school age), and parent educators (persons training as parent educators). An "other" category was included as a fifth choice in which respondents could specifiy the kind of parent education at which they worked. Respondents were also asked to indicate their primary role in parent education -- that of supervisor or teacher.

Content Areas of Parent Education

The content of parent education was covered in the second section of the questionnaire. Respondents were queried as to the use, source and place in preservice

training, of twenty content areas. Of the content areas chosen as being most relevent to parent education, nine were specific to prenatal education and included topics concerning the management of pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. The other eleven content areas were general to parenting and included topics related to family, marriage relations and human development.

Respondents were asked to check the content areas that they used in their teaching. To determine where the area was acquired, respondents were asked to choose the most significant source from one of the following:

1. Agency preservice training or orientation;
2. Agency inservice training;
3. Academic education; and
4. Self-directed study.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate five content areas which they considered to be most essential to a preservice training program for parent educators.

Teaching Skills for Parent Educators

The process of parent education was covered in the third section of the questionnaire. Respondents were questionned as to the use, source and place in a preservice training program of fifteen teaching skills.

These teaching skills included techniques appropriate to managing adult learners in an adult education classroom. Eight of these teaching skills were general in their applicability to all educators and included such skills as organizing and managing a classroom, interpreting research literature and preparing audio-visual material. Seven of these teaching skills related to specific methods of teaching such as using small group discussion or the lecture method.

Respondents were asked to check the skills that they used in their teaching. As in the second section, in order to determine where the skill was acquired, respondents were asked to choose the most significant source from one of the following:

1. Agency preservice training or orientation;
2. Agency inservice training;
3. Academic education; and
4. Self-directed study.

Respondents were also asked to choose five of the fifteen skills which they thought were most essential in a preservice training program for parent educators.

Training of Parent Educators

The third section of the questionnaire involved the perceptions of parent educators concerning several aspects of training. One of these aspects dealt with

the screening and selection of applicants. The importance of methods of training was determined. Participation of respondents in training was examined through questions concerning the effectiveness of training as well as their reasons for participating, and barriers to participation in training. This section also included a question about the level of need for more inservice training and about who should be most responsible for training. Respondents were asked to select the basis upon which applicants for the job of parent educator should be selected.

Knowledge of content areas, ability to teach adult students, personal characteristics and the applicant being a parent were available as choices. The importance of screening of applicants for the job of parent educator, as well as the importance of four methods of training: agency preservice, agency inservice, academic education and self-directed study were determined. Respondents could rate the importance on a five-point scale, with "1" being of very low importance and "5" being of very high importance.

Participation of respondents in five kinds of approaches to training between January 1, 1985 and December 31, 1985 was identified. The approaches included parent education conferences or workshops, other non-credit courses or workshops which were not

specific to parenting topics, self-directed study, college or university credit courses and local meetings of parent educators. There were several reasons why respondents may not have participated in training programs in the past or which might prevent them from participating in the future. These reasons were listed as personal, professional or training program related. Respondents were asked to identify the reasons for participating in training programs from seven purposes such as satisfy a personal need, develop a better self image, or lead to a university degree.

If the circumstances were right and courses of interest were available, respondents were asked to which format they would commit themselves to study parent education. The five formats were:

1. Non-credit workshop or course;
2. Certificate program;
3. Diploma program;
4. Undergraduate degree program; and
5. Graduate degree program.

Groups such as community college, university, employing agency or the parent educator herself were suggested as possible bodies to be most responsible for the training of parent educators. Respondents were directed to choose the one most responsible for training.

Professional Development of Parent Educators

The fourth section provided respondents with the opportunity to identify two or three of the most pressing training needs of parent educators, to propose improvements for the delivery of training programs, and to give any other comments about parent education programs.

Instrument Revision

The first draft of the questionnaire was checked by a panel of four experts in adult education, research design and parent education for inclusiveness, clarity and format. The panel included Dr. A.G. Konrad, Professor of Educational Administration, University of Alberta; Ms. J. Morton, Director of the Association for Adults with Learning Disabilities; Mr. M. Evans, Program Head, Research Department, Grant MacEwan Community College; and Ms. M. Andrews, Parent Educator, The Parent Center, Edmonton.

The questionnaire was adjusted for general format upon the suggestions of the panel. The section originally called "general knowledge" was renamed "Background" and was placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. A page of definitions included at the front of the questionnaire was felt to be unnecessary and the definitions were interspersed where

appropriate. For instance, the types of parent education were defined within the question which pertained to them. The question on marital status, though common in many questionnaires, was felt to be unnecessary to this study as was the question concerning perceived strengths in content areas and teaching skills.

The five sections of the questionnaire were divided so that each section began on a separate page and each section was copied in a different color of paper for easy differentiation. Adjustments to the general format included careful rewording of all instructions and statements so as to be grammatically parallel and clear.

Another adjustment to the questionnaire included changes to the lists of teaching skills and content areas. Many of the teaching skills were too complex to be easily understood by parent educators who may not have teaching backgrounds so, the twenty-four original teaching skills were reduced to fifteen. For instance, the skill "structuring the learning experience -- simple to complex" was incorporated into "developing course objectives." "Using teachers' aids" was one of the skills which were deleted because, though it is a common teaching skill, it was suggested by the panel that it was not common to parent educators. There were

additions made to content areas in such areas as nutrition, normal pregnancy and those having to do with parenting in general such as family variations, family relationships and family resources. The content areas, teaching skills and barriers to participation in Section IV, were typed with spaces between groups of four or five areas or skills so that readability was enhanced.

The covering letter (Appendix B) was expanded to clarify the purpose of the study, the sample for the study and the way in which confidentiality of the respondents would be respected.

Pilot Testing

Eight parent educators were invited to participate in the pretesting of the questionnaire. All were currently teaching prenatal or parent education at The Parent Center. Four had medical or science backgrounds, and four had an education background and teaching experience. On the basis of the pilot test, minor changes were made to the format of the questionnaire. For instance, it was generally felt that having respondents choose the name of the source rather than a number representing the source would be easier. A change was also made to have respondents indicate the use of a content area or teaching skill by

having them place a check in a designated area beside each answer rather than in areas placed haphazardly throughout Sections II or III. Their input was particularly helpful in rewording the covering letter to increase clarity of purpose. The suggestion to incorporate the purposes within the text of the letter rather than listing them on a separate page was also put into effect.

Validity of the Instrument

In order to improve individual items and the entire instrument, the instrument was examined for face and content validity. The instrument was tested for content validity by submitting it to a group of experts on parent and adult education. The questionnaires were checked for face validity to ascertain that the questions addressed the topic in a clear and straightforward manner. Face validity was judged by the panel of experts as well as by the representative sample of the survey population during the pretest by appraising what the content of the survey measured. As this questionaire purports to measure the training needs of parent educators, the items were examined as to their relevance to the content and process of parent education.

Reliability of the Instrument

There were no formal measures undertaken to establish reliability of responses to the questionnaire items. However, care was taken to ensure the clarity of the questionnaire through examination by the panel of experts and in the pilot testing. By reducing any ambiguous wording, the likelihood that respondents would interpret items identically from one time to another was increased.

Identification of the Sample

Much of parent education happens as an auxiliary function for many parent educators (Harman and Brim, 1980). Consequently, there is no comprehensive list of parent educators. Available were lists from two local parent education groups -- The Edmonton Area Birth Educators and The Parenting Resources Committee. It was the membership lists of these committees which served as the basis for the sample of this study. Parent educators, independent of these committees, were identified through contacts with such organizations as Edmonton and Alberta Social Services, Local Boards of Health in outlying areas of Edmonton, and the Continuing Education departments of the Separate and Public School Boards. The questionnaire was

distributed to educators who comprised the above mentioned sources.

Collection of Data

One hundred and thirty-seven respondents were mailed questionnaires on February 17, 1986. A covering letter from the investigator, explaining the study and inviting participation was enclosed (Appendix B). All received a return envelope, stamped and addressed, to expedite returns.

Since the questionnaires were anonymous, a complete follow-up was performed to stimulate tardy respondents (Appendix C). On March 10, 1986, 137 letters were sent from the investigator requesting respondents' participation and thanking them if they had already responded. A total of 80 (58%) persons returned completed questionnaires.

Analysis of the Data

The seven items in the Background section were used as independent variables. For the four items, age, level of schooling, length of service and type of parent education, categories were collapsed for ease of data analysis. The groupings by age consisted of under twenty-nine, thirty to thirty-nine and forty to sixty plus. Two divisions within the level of schooling were

established: some high school to some college or university; and college graduate to university graduate degree. There were three divisions within the length of service item -- less than two years, three to four years and five or more years. In the type of parent education, prenatal teachers constituted one group and all other types of parent educators became the second group.

Data analysis was accomplished via computer processing and data entry was verified through the use of a double checking procedure. Frequency counts and percentages were obtained to indicate the distribution of responses of the total sample on each item. T tests and F tests were used for analysis of continuous data; Chi square was used for analysis of categorical data; and content analysis was applied to comments.

Summary

Based on the literature that dealt with the validity of mailed-questionnaire needs assessments, as well as time and financial constraints, the questionnaire method was selected for use in this study. The sample for the study was identified as all parent educators currently teaching parent education in greater Edmonton. A questionnaire was designed, then

revised after critique by a panel of experts, then revised again after pilot testing.

Data were collected by mailed questionnaire and the results analyzed by descriptive statistical techniques. Variables relating to content areas, teaching skills and teaching needs were compared according to independent variables of background information. T and F tests were used for analysis of continuous data; Chi square was used for analysis of categorical data; and content analysis was applied to the comments.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

The results of the study are reported according to the areas specified in the objectives of the study: background information, teaching skills and content areas used by parent educators, training needs and general comments from the parent educators under the heading of professional development.

Demographic Information

Respondents were surveyed as to their age, gender, highest level of schooling, adequacy of their academic preparation, length of service, type of parent education they teach and their primary role.

Age

Parent educators in greater Edmonton are for the most part, between the ages of thirty and forty-nine. Less than four percent were found in either of the age brackets of under twenty-five and over sixty years of age (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Age of Parent Educators

Age	f	%
under 25	2	3
25 to 29	13	16
30 to 39	36	45
40 to 49	20	25
50 to 59	8	10
60 plus	1	1

Gender

Eleven (14%) of the respondents were male. Sixty-six (85%) of the respondents were female. Three respondents did not respond to this question.

Highest Level of Schooling

There were six levels of schooling listed from which respondents indicated their highest level. Table 4.2 shows these levels with the numbers of respondents in each. The highest number of respondents, 54 respondents (68%) held a university degree.

Table 4.2

Highest Level of Schooling

Level	f	%
High school graduate	2	3
Technical training	4	5
Some College/University	7	9
College graduate	5	6
University degree	54	68
University graduate degree	8	10

Type of Parent Educator

Parent educators surveyed included four major types of teachers categorized according to the kind of class they teach: prenatal classes, parenting classes, family life education, or classes to train parent educators. Of the one hundred and thirty-seven questionnaires mailed, eighty were returned. Table 4.3 shows an overlap in responses in these four types of teachers. It should be noted that, though N=80 in this table, as in all the tables in this chapter unless otherwise indicated, the totals in Table 4.3 are greater than eighty. This is due to the fact that

there were respondents who taught more than one type of parent education.

Table 4.3

Type of Parent Educator

Type of teaching	f	%
Prenatal (parents who are pregnant)	52	65
Parent (parents who have children)	41	51
Family life (students of school age)	27	34
Parent educators (persons training parent educators)	12	15
Other	7	9

The largest groups of respondents, fifty-two (65%), and forty-one (51%), taught prenatal classes and parenting classes, respectively. Twenty-seven (34%) of the respondents described themselves as teachers of family life education and twelve (15%) as trainees of parent education.

"Other" included parent education which was specific to foster parents, marital and family counselling, postpartum patients, single parents, incare children, seniors and the public at large.

Adequacy of Academic Preparation

Parent educators were asked to comment on the adequacy of their academic preparation for their role as a parent educator (Table 4.4). Responses were grouped with respect to adequacy as "very low to low," "moderate," and "high to very high." In the first group, twenty-three percent indicated their academic preparation was of very low to low adequacy. The second group, thirty-six percent of the respondents, rated the adequacy of their academic preparation as "moderate." Thirty-nine percent of the respondents felt that their academic preparation was of high to very high adequacy. While these three groups yielded a fairly even distribution of responses, a majority of the respondents (75%) rated their academic preparation as moderately high to highly adequate for their role as parent educators.

Table 4.4

Adequacy of Academic Preparation

Adequacy	f	%
Very low to low	18	23
Moderate	29	36
High to very high	31	39

Length of Service

Table 4.5 shows that more than half of the respondents had been parent educators for five years or more. Forty-seven percent had been parent educators for four years or less, with twenty-six percent having taught for three or four years and twenty-one percent having taught for two years or less.

Table 4.5

Length of Service

Years	f	%
2 years or less	17	21
3 - 4 years	21	26
5 or more years	42	53

Primary Role

Ten (13%) of respondents defined their primary role as supervisory, while seventy respondents (88%) considered teaching as their primary role.

Teaching Skills and Content Areas

Respondents were queried as to both their use and source of the teaching skills and the content areas in parent education. They were also asked to identify those skills or areas which were essential to a preservice training program. Fifteen teaching skills and twenty content areas were included as choices with an "other" category available for respondents to add other skills or areas.

Use of Teaching Skills

Fifteen teaching skills relevant to parent education were used as variables in assessing their use by parent educators in their teaching. These teaching skills included techniques appropriate to managing adult learners in a parent education classroom.

More than half (55%) of the respondents were currently using twelve of the teaching skills (Table 4.6). The two skills of "providing field experience opportunities" and "instructing students with handicaps" were used by twenty-six percent and twenty-four percent, respectively. None of the respondents claimed to use case studies in their teaching while "Other" teaching skills being used by parent educators included ROPE -- a program described by the respondents

as a systematic plan of instruction, the use of guest speakers and sensitivity training.

Table 4.6

Teaching Skills Used by Parent Educators

Skill	f	%
Using lecture method	73	91
Developing course objectives	72	90
Using demonstrations/models	70	88
Preparing/using audio-visual	70	88
Using small group	68	85
Preparing/using lesson plans	68	85
Evaluating teaching/learning	68	85
Interpreting research literature	65	81
Motivating the adult learner	63	79
Organizing/management classroom	61	76
Using games/simulations	60	75
Using role-playing techniques	55	69
Providing field experience	26	33
Instructing students with handicaps	24	30
Other	3	4
Using case studies	0	0

Source of Teaching Skills

Respondents were asked to identify the most significant source of acquiring the teaching skills that they used as parent educators: agency preservice training or orientation, agency inservice training, academic education or self-directed study. According

to the responses shown in Table 4.7, acquisition of these teaching skills were acquired most frequently through academic education, then through self-directed study, inservice training and preservice training.

Table 4.7 also shows that within each of the four sources of skills certain skills were acquired. In preservice training, "preparing and using audio-visual equipment" was cited as being acquired by the greatest number of respondents (21%). Forty-six percent of the respondents said inservice training was the main source of their acquisition of the skills of "reading and interpreting research literature," while forty-six percent claimed academic education as the most significant source of their skill in using the lecture method. The two teaching skills of "organizing and managing a classroom" and "using group discussion" were acquired by twenty-nine percent of respondents in a self-directed manner of study.

None of the respondents claimed any "Other" teaching skills from preservice training, inservice training or academic education. Four percent said that they were self-directed in the acquisition of ROPE -- a systematic plan of instruction, sensitivity training, and guest speakers.

Table 4.7

Distribution of Training Sources

of Teaching Skills

Skills	Source							
	Preser-vice		Inser-vice		Aca-demic		Self-Directed	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Organizing/managing classroom	8	10	13	16	24	30	23	29
Developing course objectives	16	20	15	19	28	35	13	16
Preparing/using audio-visual	17	21	22	28	12	15	19	24
Reading/interpreting research	4	5	37	46	22	28	17	21
Motivating the adult learner	2	3	13	16	25	31	21	26
Instructing students with learning handicaps	1	1	2	3	4	5	17	21
Using small group discussion	10	13	16	20	19	24	23	29
Using the lecture method	11	14	8	10	37	46	17	21
Using games and simulations	9	11	22	28	8	10	16	20
Preparing and using lesson plans	10	13	10	13	31	39	15	19
Using case studies	1	1	5	6	14	18	20	25
Evaluating the teaching-learning process	10	13	16	20	24	30	15	19
Using demonstrations and models	14	18	20	26	15	19	20	25
Using role-playing techniques	5	6	21	26	9	11	15	19
Providing field experience	5	6	5	6	6	8	10	13
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4

Use of Content Areas

Twenty content areas relevant to parent education were used as variables in assessing content used by parent educators. These content areas included areas common to parent education. More than half of parent educators were using fourteen of the twenty content areas listed in Table 4.8.

"Parenting skills," "Human development" and "Nutrition" were the content areas which were used by most of the respondents while the areas of "Marriage preparation/enrichment," "Family as a Canadian institution" and "Family resources" were areas used the least. Thirty-nine percent to sixty-four percent of the respondents said they used the other fourteen content areas. No other content areas were added by respondents, nor were any of the areas not used.

Source of Content Areas

Respondents were asked to identify the most significant source of their knowledge of the content areas that they used as parent educators: preservice training, inservice training, academic education or self-directed study. According to the responses shown in Table 4.9, acquisition of these content areas was

Table 4.8

Content Areas Used by Parent Educators

Content Areas	f	%
Parenting skills	63	79
Human development	60	75
Nutrition	58	73
Postpartum period	51	64
Physical and emotional discomforts	51	64
Management of normal childbirth	46	58
Medical intervention	46	58
Family centered maternity care	46	58
Biological sciences	52	65
Needs and life stages	52	65
Family relations	50	63
Variations in labour and delivery	48	60
Psychology of the pregnant couple	47	59
Breathing and relaxation	45	56
Health consumer advocacy	39	49
Family variations	33	41
Personality theory	31	39
Family resources	24	30
Family as a Canadian institution	18	23
Marriage preparation/enrichment	15	19

Table 4.9

Distribution of Training Sources

of Content Areas

Area	Source							
	Preservice		Inservice		Academic		Self-directed	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Family as a Canadian institution	2	3	2	3	8	10	6	8
Marriage preparation/enrichment	0	0	2	3	2	3	11	14
Family resources	1	2	5	6	3	4	15	19
Family relationships	3	4	11	14	17	21	19	24
Family variations	2	3	8	10	7	9	16	20
Human development	3	4	9	11	39	49	9	11
Personality theory	1	2	3	4	19	24	8	10
Needs and life stages	1	1	9	11	27	34	15	19
Psychology of pregnant couple	3	4	9	11	18	23	17	21
Biological sciences	2	3	6	8	40	50	4	5
Nutrition	4	5	22	28	21	26	11	14
Normal child-bearing cycle	8	10	8	10	27	34	10	13
Variations in labour/delivery	6	8	8	10	26	33	8	10
Medical intervention	5	6	7	9	28	35	6	8
Family centered maternity care	7	9	11	14	11	14	17	21
Health consumer advocacy	6	8	8	10	8	10	17	22
Breathing/relaxation techniques	15	19	17	21	6	8	7	9
Physical/emotional discomforts	9	11	5	6	21	26	16	20
Postpartum period	6	8	8	10	22	28	15	19
Parenting skills	4	5	16	20	12	15	31	39

greatest through academic education, self-directed study, then through inservice and preservice training.

Table 4.9 also shows that within each of the four sources, certain content areas were acquired. Nineteen percent of the respondents cited preservice training as the most significant source of "Breathing and relaxation techniques." It was in inservice training where twenty-eight percent of the respondents acquired the content area of "Nutrition." Forty-nine percent and fifty percent, respectively, claimed academic education as the source of their knowledge of "human development and biological sciences." The content area of "Parenting skills" was acquired by thirty-nine percent of the respondents through self-directed study.

Essential Teaching Skills and Content Areas

Respondents were asked to indicate the teaching skills and content areas which would be most essential in a preservice orientation program for parent educators (Table 4.10).

Fewer than sixty percent of the respondents chose a content area as being essential to preservice training for parent educators. Fifty-six percent of the respondents chose "Parenting skills" as the most

Table 4.10

Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training

Content Areas	f	%
Parenting skills	45	56
Breathing and relaxation skills	33	41
Management of normal child-bearing cycle	28	35
Needs and life stages	28	35
Family relationships	27	34
Human development	27	34
Nutrition	25	31
Variations in labour and delivery	19	24
Psychology of the pregnant couple	19	24
Postpartum period	16	20
Medical intervention	14	18
Physical and emotional discomforts	13	16
Family variations	11	14
Family-centered maternity care	11	14
Health consumer advocacy	10	13
Marriage preparation and enrichment	10	13
Personality theory	10	13
Family resources	9	11
Biological sciences	8	10
Family as a Canadian institution	4	5

essential content area that should be included in preservice training, and "Family as a Canadian Institution" was chosen as the least essential content area for preservice training (5%).

The percentage range of teaching skills which were thought to be essential to preservice training was three to sixty percent (Table 4.11). This was similar

Table 4.11

Essential Teaching Skills for Preservice

Skill	f	%
Developing course objectives	48	60
Evaluating the teaching-learning process	47	59
Motivating the adult learner	42	53
Using small group discussion	40	50
Preparing and using lesson plans	42	53
Organizing and managing a classroom	30	38
Preparing and using AV equipment	27	34
Using demonstrations and models	25	31
Using role-playing techniques	19	24
Using games and simulations	15	19
Using the lecture method	15	19
Reading and interpreting research literature	12	15
Providing field trip experiences	5	6
Using case studies	4	5
Instructing students with learning handicaps	3	4
Other	2	3

to the percentage range of five to fifty-six percent of essential content areas for preservice.

Sixty percent of the respondents chose "Developing course objectives" as the most essential teaching skill. Of the respondents five percent, four percent

and three percent, respectively, cited the skills of "Providing field trip experiences, "Using case studies" and "Instructing students with learning handicaps" as being least essential to preservice. Three percent of the respondents noted "Other" teaching skills as being essential to preservice training: "Knowledge of self" and "Leadership styles."

Training

The third section of the survey involved the perceptions of parent educators concerning several aspects of training. Opinions on the importance of screening and selection of applicants to be parent educators were requested. The relative importance of the four major methods of training was investigated. These four methods were defined as: inservice, preservice, academic and self-directed study. Respondents were asked about their past and future participation in a variety of training approaches including workshops, self-directed study, credit and non-credit courses and local meetings. Respondents' opinions as to the effectiveness of these training approaches were also invited. Their reasons for participating in training programs as well as the possible barriers to participation in training programs were ascertained. Respondents anticipated a commitment

to a variety of training formats. The opinion of the respondents was also acquired as to the agency responsible for training of parent educators.

Screening and Selection of Parent Educators

Fifty-six percent of respondents felt that screening of applicants for the job of parent educator was "very important." As seen in Table 4.12, the factors of "Knowledge of content areas" and "The ability to teach" were seen by eighty-six percent and eighty-five percent of respondents as the basis upon which applicants should be selected. "Personal characteristics" was a factor that was thought to be an important basis of selection by seventy percent of the respondents. Twenty-two (28%) of the respondents thought that "Being a parent" was the least important factor in the selection of parent educators.

Table 4.12

Selection of Parent Educators

Factor	f	%
Knowledge of content areas	69	86
Ability to teach	68	85
Personal characteristics	56	70
Being a parent	22	28

Importance of Training Methods

Four common training methods were identified: agency preservice training, agency inservice training, academic education and self-directed study. The survey questioned the importance of each of these methods of training for parent educators. All four methods of training were given high levels of importance by respondents (Table 4.13). Agency inservice training and self-directed study were seen as having the highest level of importance. Though agency preservice training and academic education were seen as being the least important, the standard deviation shows that there was less consensus for these results than for the other methods.

Table 4.13

Importance of Methods of Training

Method	Mean	Standard Deviation
Agency inservice training	4.4	.78
Self-directed study	4.4	.76
Agency preservice training	4.2	.97
Academic education	3.9	1.01

Effectiveness of Training Approaches

Five approaches to training were listed as credit or non-credit workshops and conferences, local meetings of parent educators, university or college courses and self-directed study. Respondents were invited to give their opinion as to the effectiveness of these five approaches to training. While all approaches were seen as being effective, "Workshops and conferences" were seen as slightly more effective than other approaches for training (Table 4.14), and "College/university credit courses" along with "Local meetings" were seen as being least effective.

Table 4.14

Effectiveness of Training Approaches

Approaches	Mean	Standard Deviation
Workshops and conferences	4.2	.71
Non-credit conferences/workshops	3.8	.93
Self-directed study	3.4	1.04
Local meetings	3.8	.84
College/university credit courses	3.5	.94

Participation in Past Training

Respondents were asked whether or not they had participated in any of the above mentioned methods of training in the period of time between January 1, 1985 and December 31, 1985. The greatest number of respondents (78%) had been self-directed in their approach to training during this time. Forty-six percent of the respondents had been involved in parent education conferences or workshops while fifty-nine percent cited "Other noncredit courses and workshops" as the training in which they had been involved.

Table 4.15

Participation in Past Training

Approaches	f	%
Self-directed study	62	78
Noncredit courses/workshops (other)	47	59
Conferences/workshops (parent ed.)	37	46
Local meetings	32	40
College/university credit courses	14	18

"Local meetings" was an approach to training which had forty percent of the respondents as participants while

"College/university credit courses" claimed only eighteen percent of respondents. Table 4.15 depicts the range of participation in these five approaches.

Barriers to Participation

As important as training may be to parent educators, in many instances, there are reasons which make it difficult or even impossible for parent educators to participate in training programs. Twenty barriers were listed as well as an "Other" category from which respondents were invited to identify reasons which had prevented them from participating in training programs or which might prevent them from participating in the future. Table 4.16 lists these barriers and shows that "Home responsibilities," "Job responsibilities," and "Not enough time" claimed most of the respondents' reasons for not participating in training (54%, 51% and 50%, respectively). Less than fifty percent of the respondents said that any of the twenty other reasons were barriers to their participation.

Though the "other" space was not filled, there were several additional comments added to the questionnaire. Respondents remarked on the facts of budget constraints and "Striking nurses" as obstacles to their participation in training. "Same old courses"

and "Not enough courses being offered" were mentioned. One respondent stated that some convincing was needed to prove that there would be some benefit from the time spent on courses before participation could be committed. Another addition to this answer was the comment: "I'd be more likely to teach than to take training" -- perhaps a comment on the relevancy of courses offered for those who had been teaching for some time.

Table 4.16

Barriers to Participation in Training

Barriers	f	%
Home responsibilities	43	54
Not enough time	41	51
Job responsibilities	40	50
Wrong location	37	46
Wrong time	33	41
Not relevant	30	38
Responsibilities for children	26	33
Cost	25	31
Opportunities unknown	18	23
Not enough information	16	20
Time constraints	15	19
Transportation difficulties	13	16
No energy	8	10
No encouragement from employer	6	8
No advancement after training	5	6
Strict attendance requirements	5	6
Opposition from spouse	4	5
Don't enjoy studying	4	5
Fear of failure	2	3
Entrance requirements	1	1

Need for Inservice

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of need for more inservice training programs. As Table 4.17 shows, there was a "very high" level of need for more of this method of training (74%).

Table 4.17

Need for More Inservice Training

Level	f	%
Very low level of need	2	3
Moderate level of need	16	20
Very high level of need	59	74

Purposes for Participating in Training

Parent educators have many reasons for participating in training programs. Some of these reasons concern a need to increase job effectiveness with related career advancement opportunities or pay increases. Other reasons for participation in training relate to such personal goals as bettering a self-image or improving status in the community.

Table 4.18 shows that most parent educators (86%) were involved in training because it increased their job effectiveness. Other reasons for participating in training were expressed by sixty-six percent of the respondents to "Satisfy a personal need," and thirty-three percent for "Developing a better self-image." "Lead to a career advancement", "Improve status in community" and "Lead to a university degree" were purposes for participating in training which were chosen by eighteen percent, thirteen percent and eight percent, respectively.

Table 4.18

Purposes Served by Participation in Training

Purposes	f	%
Increase job effectiveness	69	86
Satisfy a personal need	53	66
Develop a better self-image	26	33
Lead to a career advancement	14	18
Improve status in community	10	13
Lead to a university degree	6	8
Other	5	6
Lead to a pay increase	3	4

Six percent of respondents mentioned "Other" purposes for participation in training. These included "To develop my skills as a parent educator" and three others pertained to keeping current in the rapidly changing field of parent education. The purpose served by participation in training which was cited by the fewest (4%) respondents was "Lead to a pay increase."

Commitment to a Training Format

Respondents were asked, "if the circumstances were right" and "if courses of interest were available", to anticipate their choice of commitment to a study of parent education. The five choices referred to a range of graduate, undergraduate and noncredit courses (Table 4.19). Eighty-six percent of the respondents said they would commit to a "certificate" program of study. Fifty-three percent, thirty percent, and twenty-nine percent, respectively, would commit to diploma, undergraduate degree or graduate degree programs. None of the respondents would commit to study in "non-credit workshop courses," an interesting response in light of the fact that fifty-nine percent claimed participation in non-credit workshop courses in 1985.

Table 4.19

Commitment to Training Format

Format	f	%
Certificate program	67	84
Diploma	42	53
Undergraduate degree	26	33
Graduate degree program	23	29
Non-credit workshop/course	0	0

Responsibility for Training

Responses were also varied, not only in degree of commitment to training, but also as to responsibility for the training of parent educators. Table 4.20 shows a range of responses, from four percent to thirty-five percent, spread over six suggested parent education groups, educational institutions and employing agencies.

Local parent education groups were felt, by the largest number of respondents (35%), to have responsibility for training. Twenty-five percent of the respondents chose to write in a variety of "other" bodies who should be responsible for training: social service agencies, professional associations, and public

health. University and community colleges were thought to be responsible by fifteen and eight percent respectively.

Six percent of respondents each thought that the employing agency and regional parent education groups should be responsible bodies, while four percent thought that the individual should be responsible for training.

Table 4.20

Responsibility for Training

Responsible Body	f	%
Local parent education group	28	35
Other	20	25
University	12	15
Community college	6	8
Employing agency	5	6
Regional parent education groups	5	6
Individual parent educator	3	4

Professional Development

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the professional development of parent educators by identifying pressing training needs, proposing improvements for the delivery of training and making any other general comments.

Pressing Training Needs

Respondents named three of the most pressing training needs of parent educators as access to resources, standards for teachers and mutual support.

Comments relating to the need for access to resources were of a general nature or concerned the need for process or content information (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21

Pressing Needs of Parent Educators
(N = 71)

Need	f*	%
Access to resources		
General	23	32
Content Information	23	32
Process Information	44	62
Standards for teachers		
Certification	11	15
Practical training	10	14
Mutual support	6	8

*Frequency exceeds N = 71 as some respondents identified more than one need.

Some of the comments which were general in nature (32%) spoke to the need for preservice and inservice training to be mandatory and ongoing. Preservice training,

which provided agency orientation to new instructors, needed to be improved so parent educators were better oriented to the requirements of the agency's clients. Respondents saw a need for inservice training which included ongoing professional development and the upgrading of knowledge and techniques via workshops, self study, conferences and university or community courses. There was also a need expressed for more inservice training which should also be better advertised. One respondent said there should be more inservice sessions held locally. Several respondents suggested that parent educators should be given time off from work to attend inservices, and others suggested that there should be some financial support for attendance. The need for more parent educators was mentioned as "there are hundreds of young parents who need help." In the same vein, another respondent mentioned a need for more trainers to train parent educators.

Accessibility to available resources, including audio-visual materials, personnel resources and current information was another general need. One of the respondents in a rural location expressed a need to know how to access A.V. materials; another saw a need for the development of A.V. aids. A respondent, who mentioned people as well as material resources as an

important need for parent educators, specifically noted a need to learn "how to work with consultants." There were needs expressed for information concerning the content of parent education with respondents (32%) suggesting that general knowledge as well as specific topics are important. "Good mental health concepts for living" and "nature of human behaviour" were some of the examples of needs for content information offered in the comments. It was noted several times that parent educators should not ride on their personal experiences as a parent, and that this was not a viable prerequisite to be a parent educator. Some other specific issues which were mentioned as needs of parent educators included the topics of post partum depression, sibling rivalry, discipline, abusive families, nutrition, management of labour, breathing and relaxation techniques, pre-conception information and decision-making. Other needs expressed included that of evaluation of programs, marketing of programs and a variety of personal growth subjects.

Parent educators have a need to be current with the information which they use in their classes. Respondents who taught prenatal classes said they needed information concerning maternity procedures so that there would be "improved liaison between those teaching and those delivering care." Many respondents

spoke to the difficulties in staying current with a rapidly changing knowledge base. They expressed a need to have access to research that was current and accurate. One need was expressed as "assessing and reassessing whether the material taught is meeting needs in the practical application."

Sixty-two percent of the comments concerned a pressing need for process information or adult education techniques and skills. There was a general recognition that a parent educator needed to teach differently "than your grade teacher taught you" and that appropriate "presentation of material," "facilitating" and "group leadership skills" were needed. Of the total comments related to the need for process information, seventeen percent of the respondents saw a need for personal growth, communication skills, self-awareness and counselling skills which were important to the process of parent education.

The need for improving standards in parent educator training was noted by fifteen percent of the respondents. Also expressed was the need for provincial guidelines with a standard program outlined for the training of all parent educators leading to certification. Respondents said that practical experience was needed for parent educators both in a

preservice situation and on an ongoing basis. Of the respondents (14%) who commented relative to this need, some called for an apprenticeship to or observation of an experienced teacher, others for methods of self and student evaluation.

Eight percent of the comments related to the need for mutual support among parent educators. The feeling of isolation led to an expression of need to meet with other educators who taught similar programs. The exchange of ideas, especially teaching methods, and the opportunity to develop ideas through brainstorming and sharing problems were mentioned as needs. One respondent saw meeting with other parent educators as a way to fulfill the need for recognition for a job well done.

Improvements to the Delivery of Training

Respondents were invited to comment on the improvements that they saw for the delivery of training programs for parent educators. Two respondents did not suggest improvements because "personal opinion was not relevant to other individuals" and there was a "lack of knowledge of existing training programs." The improvements which were mentioned related to accessibility of training to parent educators, the

content of training and the centralization of training (Table 4.22).

Twenty-four (35%) of the comments suggested that training could be improved by making training for parent educators more accessible. This might be accomplished by offering inservices on a regular basis, perhaps through the addition of annual conferences. Other suggestions were that there should be more inservices, more local inservice sites, more trainers to accommodate these inservices, and more inservices held at flexible times of the day and of the year to accommodate participants who have family or job commitments.

Table 4.22

Improvements to Training
(N = 68)

Improvements	f*	%
Increase Accessibility	24	35
Change Content	28	41
Centralize Training	31	46

*Frequency exceeds N = 68 as some respondents identified more than one improvement.

Forty-one percent of the comments spoke to improving training programs by changing the content of training

programs. Some of the respondents saw training programs improving when participants were invited to participate in the training. This was seen as different from the training now offered through lecturing which was not considered as practical. Participation in more field experiences and observation of parenting situations, rather than lecture, would help those participants who are not "academically inclined," and thus improve training by increasing participation.

Several of the respondents suggested that training could be improved if the topics were more practical. Topics which could be a part of training included the use of evaluation tools, how to prevent burnout and the assessment of teaching by a supervisor.

Forty-six percent of the respondents spoke to the need for some centralization of training. It was felt by respondents that this centralized training authority would "improve the quality of overall programs," would "promote professionalism," and would raise training above agency- specific information to provide "programs general to the parenting community." This central training agency could set up "competency-based" requirements, standards, and guidelines for training. One commented that this central authority could prepare instructional modules for use by parent educators who

were in areas outside Edmonton. Suggested authorities which were mentioned as possible agencies were postsecondary institutions such as the University of Alberta, Athabasca University and Grant MacEwan Community College. Other agencies included the maternal child consultant of Alberta Social Services and Community Health and a private organization, Mothercare, located in eastern Canada. One suggestion that was made was that the University of Athabasca become involved in outreach to rural areas with specially prepared instructional materials.

Related to the suggestion of a central training agency was the idea of an association of parent educators. Serving as a resource, and perhaps with mandatory membership, this association could publish newsletters and journals to keep parent educators informed about mutual concerns. Interagency co-operation instead of interagency competition was mentioned as being an important role of a central association of parent educators, which would aid parent educators as well as parent education.

General Comments

While many of the comments were duplicates of those made in the other two categories, there were more specific comments about parenting programs, parenting

resources and a central association of parent educators (Table 4.23).

The needs for parenting programs was cited as being "very great," with some participants being turned away due to limited enrolment. Parent education programs according to some respondents should be free of charge since they are an effective way of inviting change and insight for parents who lack parenting skills. There was also a suggestion that parent education was a form of therapy for parents which was more effective than intervention or guidance. As well as being more accessible, the necessity of having parenting programs which are appropriate to the clientele was mentioned. Parenting classes for single and teenage parents and classes which deal with domestic violence, child abuse, unemployment, self-concept, conflict management, and handling anger are needed. An evaluation system which ensures that these and other topics are meeting the needs of the parenting community is important. Also mentioned was the idea that there should be more advertising of parenting programs.

Table 4.23

General Comments
(N = 47)

Comments	f*	%
Parenting programs	19	40
Parenting resources	20	43
Central association	15	32

*Frequency exceeds N = 47 as some respondents identified more than one comment.

Related to the marketing of parenting programs is the need for parent educators to be aware of the resources in parent education. The idea of "networking" was mentioned as a method of cutting down on "duplication" of resources as well as the competition among parenting agencies. The Parenting Resources Committee and a resource book of parent educators was seen as a local attempt to have parent education discussed. Some comments claimed information on prenatal education and hospital policies and procedures as being particularly needed. One comment stated that resources abound but are largely unused and unexplored and "how do you get to them anyway ?" The peer support would help those who are told what to teach and when to teach "whether it is their area of expertise or not."

The need for standardization of training to "guarantee quality classes" was stressed. Thirty-two percent of the comments related to the idea of qualifications for parent educators being handled through some central association of parent educators. It was felt that this would raise the status of parent education in the community as well by raising community awareness through advertising. While flexibility of training programs was seen as important, the ongoing support from peers was important too. So, while parent educators who are trained in a variety of agencies and methods might gain from this flexibility, it was seen as important that there be a move away from a parent educator having only "institute specific" information. It was noted that the public is demanding qualified instructors not just in the area of parenting but in all adult education and that training of parent educators needs to keep up with this demand. Training should be "practically relevant" and involve the participants in ways other than listening to a lecture. The importance of a "solid knowledge base" for parent educators was important with a move away from self-directed training.

Summary

The results of the study were reported according to the areas specified in the objectives of the study: background information, teaching skills and content areas used by parent educators, training needs and professional development.

Parent educators in greater Edmonton were predominantly female. Most reported they had a university education, which they felt had adequately prepared them for their role as parent educators. Ninety percent were teachers, and most of these were in their mid-thirties. Indeed, more than fifty percent indicated having been parent educators for five or more years.

More than sixty percent of the respondents reported using twelve of the teaching skills listed and more than half of parent educators are using fourteen of the twenty content areas listed. Parent educators indicated that the major source of information on both teaching skills and content areas was their academic education. Self-directed study, agency inservice followed by agency preservice were sources of the skills and content areas they used as parent educators.

The five teaching skills of preparing and using lesson plans, using small group discussion, motivating the adult learner, evaluating the teaching-learning

process and developing course objectives, were cited by more than fifty percent of respondents as essential to preservice training. Only one content area -- parenting skills -- was chosen by the majority of respondents as essential for preservice training.

The majority of respondents reported that screening of applicants for the job of parent educator was very important, with the factor of "being a parent" seen as being of least importance. Agency inservice, self-directed study and agency preservice were given equal importance as training methods. There was a "very high" level of need perceived for more inservice training; a majority of respondents had been involved in parent education conferences or other non-credit workshops; and a large number (78%) were self-directed in their approach to training. Parent education workshops and conferences were seen as the most effective approach to training. Eighty-six percent of respondents stated that they participated in training because it increased job effectiveness and, if circumstances were right, they would commit to a program of study which resulted in a certificate. The responsibility for training was thought to lie in the main with local parent education groups.

The most pressing training needs identified by respondents concerned those of access to resources,

standards for parent educators and mutual support. Suggestions proposed for the improvement for the delivery of training programs for parent educators were to increase access to training, change the content and centralize the training. General comments concerned the need for more parenting programs, training for parent educators and the need for an association for parent educators.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of the Data

This chapter contains an analysis of the data. Mean scores were compared based on the differences by the following independent variables:

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Highest level of schooling
4. Adequacy of academic preparation
5. Length of service
6. Type of service
7. Primary role

A discussion of the significant differences for each of these variables is included. T tests and F tests were used to examine differences on continuous data. Chi square analysis was used to analyze categorical data, and the Yates correction was incorporated whenever appropriate. Content analysis was applied to comments on open-ended items. The use and source of twenty content areas and sixteen teaching skills relevant to parent education were assessed. As parent educators commonly acquire these content areas and teaching skills through the four sources below, these sources were also included as categories in the analysis:

1. Agency preservice training or orientation
2. Agency inservice training
3. Academic education
4. Self-directed study

Analyses in this chapter are based on the data derived from respondents who identified the use and source of both content areas and teaching skills for parent educators. Consequently, the total number of respondents in the data categories differ from those data reported in Chapter 4.

Age

The analysis by age of respondents was based on three divisions: twenty-nine years and under, thirty to thirty-nine years and forty years of age plus. Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 provides a detailed breakdown of respondents by age grouping. There were no significant differences based on age compared to any of the independent variables.

Gender

There were eleven male respondents and sixty-six female respondents to this questionnaire. Three respondents did not complete this part of the background information.

Significant differences according to gender were seen in the source of content areas and teaching skills, in the choice of content areas which were essential for preservice training, in the basis for selection of parent educators, in types of

participation in training, in barriers to participation in training, in the level of need for more training and in their commitment to training format.

Sources of Content Areas

Male and female respondents showed significant differences in the source of three content areas: family relationships, personality theory and parenting skills (Table 5.1). Sixty-three percent of the eleven male respondents acquired the information concerning family relationships through inservice training while forty-one percent of the sixty-nine female respondents were self-directed in their acquisition of this content area. In the area of personality theory, sixty-seven percent of the male respondents acquired this information through academic education, and none of the male respondents were self-directed in this area. While fifty-five percent of the female respondents cited academic education as a source of this content area, forty percent were self-directed in acquiring personality theory.

In the acquisition of parenting skills, fifty percent of male respondents cited inservice training as the source of this content area but only twenty-two percent of the female respondents identified inservice training as a source of information on this item for

Table 5.1.

Significant Differences Within Sources of Content Areas by Gender*

Area	Gender			
	Male (11)*		Female (66)*	
	f	%	f	%
Family relationships				
preservice	1	13	2	5
inservice	5	63	6	15
academic	1	13	15	39
self-directed	1	13	16	41
Total	8		39	
Chi square = 9.6		Probability = .02		
Personality theory				
preservice	1	11	0	0
inservice	2	22	11	5
academic	6	67	11	55
self-directed	0	0	8	40
Total	9		20	
Chi square = 7.7		Probability = .05		
Parenting Skills				
preservice	1	10	3	6
inservice	5	50	11	22
academic	4	40	7	14
self-directed	0	0	29	58
Total	10		50	
Chi square = 11.5		Probability = .01		

*Numbers in parentheses, which indicate the number of subjects in each category, are taken from data tables in Chapter 4.

percent of the female respondents cited self-directed training as the source of their information on parenting skills, while none of the male respondents reported being self-directed in the acquisition of this content area.

Sources of Teaching Skills

Significant differences were also found between male and female respondents in their source of two teaching skills: using case studies and evaluating the teaching/learning process. As Table 5.2 shows, fifty percent of the male respondents cited academic education as the source of the teaching skill using case studies while only thirty-one percent of the female respondents saw academic education as a source of this skill. Sixty percent of the female respondents saw themselves as self-directed in their acquisition of this skill, while only thirteen percent of the male respondents were self-directed. The highest number of male respondents (70% and 20%) acquired evaluating the teaching/learning process through preservice and inservice training while these were cited as the lowest percentages by the female respondents (17% and 15%). Conversely, the highest number of female respondents (40% and 27%) reported academic education and self-

directed study as the source of this skill compared to the lowest of the male respondents (10% and 0%).

Table 5.2

Significant Differences Within Sources of Teaching Skills by Gender

Skills	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Using case studies				
preservice	2	25	3	9
inservice	1	13	0	0
academic	4	50	10	31
self-directed	1	13	19	60
Total	8		32	
Chi square = 8.7		Probability = .03		
Evaluating teaching/learning process				
preservice	7	70	9	17
inservice	2	20	8	15
academic	1	10	21	40
self-directed	0	0	14	27
Total	10		52	
Chi square = 14.00		Probability = .002		

Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training

The differences between genders was seen in their choices of the content areas which they considered most

essential to a preservice training program (Table 5.3). There were five content areas which concerned prenatal

Table 5.3

Significant Differences Across Most Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training by Gender

Area	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Family as a Canadian institution	1	25	3	75
Marriage preparation/enrichment	3	33	6	67
Family resources	3	38	5	63
Family relationships	7	27	19	73
Family variations	4	36	7	64
Human development	6	23	20	77
Personality theory	3	33	6	67
Needs and life stages	5	19	22	82
Psychology of pregnant couple	0	0	19	100
Biological sciences	1	13	7	88
Nutrition	4	17	20	83
Normal child-bearing cycle	2	7	26	93
Variations in labour/delivery	0	0	19	100
Medical interventions	1	7	13	93
Family centered maternity care	0	0	11	100
Health consumer advocacy	0	0	10	100
Breathing/relaxation techniques	1	3	32	97
Physical/emotional discomforts	0	0	13	100
Postpartum period	1	6	15	94
Parenting skills	8	17	40	83

Chi square = 38.5 Probability = .01

education that male respondents suggested not to be essential (0%) compared to all (100%) of the females who thought these areas were essential. In four other content areas, which also concerned prenatal teaching, again the female respondents considered these areas to be essential while the male respondents did not. There were more than twenty-five percent of the male respondents who considered the six most essential content areas for preservice training to be those which had to do with the family and marriage -- topics for the teaching of parenting. The highest number of males to choose an essential area was thirty-eight percent for the content area family resources: energy and money.

Selection of parent educators

There were significantly more male respondents who thought that parent educators should be parents in order to be parent educators compared to female respondents (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4

Significant Difference in the
Basis of Selection of Parent Educators by Gender

Basis	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Being a parent	6	55	16	24
Chi square = 4.24		Probability = .03		

Participation in Training

In terms of participation in different types of training programs, many more female respondents (93%) participated in self-directed study than did their male colleagues (70%) as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Significant Difference in Types of Participation in Training by Gender

Types	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Self-directed study	7	70	53	93
Chi square = 4.8		Probability = .03		

Barriers to Participation in Training

There were three barriers to participation in training which showed significant differences according to gender: not enough energy, the time required to complete the program and not enjoying studying. As suggested in Table 5.6, considerably more male respondents than female respondents, proportionately, regarded each of these as barriers.

Table 5.6

Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Gender

Barriers	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Not enough energy - too tired	3	27	4	6
Chi square = 5.1	Probability = .02			
Time required to complete	5	46	9	14
Chi square = 6.4	Probability = .01			
Don't enjoy studying	3	73	1	2
Chi square = 12.7	Probability = .0004			

Need for Training

Significant differences were apparent in levels of need for more training as reported by male and female respondents (Table 5.7). While the male respondents expressed needs for inservice that ranged through all levels, female respondents seemed to perceive a higher need for training than did male respondents.

Table 5.7

Significant Difference in Level of Need for More Training by Gender

Level	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Very low	1	9	0	0
Low	1	9	0	0
Moderate	2	18	13	21
High	4	36	30	48
Very high	3	27	20	32
Chi square = 11.8		Probability = .02		

Commitment to Training

Male and female respondents differed in their commitment to training format as seen in Table 5.8. Whereas only sixty-six percent of the male respondents would commit themselves to a certificate program, ninety-seven percent of the female respondents reported they would commit themselves to this kind of training format.

Table 5.8

Significant Difference in Commitment to Training Format by Gender

Format	Gender			
	Male (11)		Female (66)	
	f	%	f	%
Certificate program	6	66	58	97
Chi square = 10.48		Probability = .001		

Summary

There were eleven male respondents and sixty-six female respondents. Three respondents did not indicate their gender. The teaching skills which were identified as being significantly different by gender were using case studies and evaluating the teaching-learning process. Content areas with significant differences were family relationships, personality theory and parenting skills.

Male and female respondents differed significantly in their acquisition of the identified areas. The male respondents said inservice training and academic education were most significant as sources; the female

respondents claimed self-directed study as the most significant.

Women expressed higher levels of need for inservice training, and almost all the women would commit to a training format resulting in certification. Men cited not enough energy, time to complete the program and not enjoying studying as barriers to their participation in training.

Highest Level of Schooling

Two groups of respondents were identified from the variable highest level of schooling: those who had high school to college levels of education and those with university education as their highest level of schooling. There were eighteen respondents with college level education or less and sixty-two respondents with university education.

Significant differences were seen between these two groups in the sources of content areas, in the teaching skills which were thought to be essential to preservice training, in the commitment to training format and in the responsible body for training.

Sources of Content Areas

Significant differences were seen in the source of two content areas: postpartum period and parenting skills. Seventy-seven percent of those who had achieved no higher than a college level of education claimed their academic education was the greatest source of their information about the postpartum period (Table 5.9). Within the group of respondents with university degrees, respondents indicated self-direction (34%) and academic education (32%) as the greatest source for this information.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents who had college education or less, indicated that they were self-directed in their acquiring information concerning parenting skills; forty percent of respondents with university degrees cited this as a source of these skills.

Table 5.9

Significant Differences in Sources of Content Areas by Highest Level of Schooling

Area	Level			
	College - (18)		University (62)	
	f	%	f	%
Postpartum period				
preservice	1	8	5	13
inservice	0	0	8	21
academic	10	77	12	32
self-directed	2	15	13	34
Total	13		38	
Chi square = 8.76		Probability = .03		
Parenting skills				
preservice	1	8	3	6
inservice	1	8	15	30
academic	0	0	12	24
self-directed	11	85	20	40
Total	13		60	
Chi square = 9.36		Probability = .02		

Essential Teaching Skills in Preservice Training

There were significant differences between respondents with college education or less and those with university education as to which teaching skills were essential to preservice training (Table 5.10). Respondents with college education or less saw seven of

Table 5.10

Significant Differences Across Teaching Skills Essential to Preservice Training by Highest Level of Schooling

Skill	Level of Schooling			
	College - (18)		University (62)	
	f	%	f	%
Organizing/managing a classroom	0	0	3	5
Developing course objectives	0	0	3	5
Preparing/using A.V. equipment	0	0	4	7
Reading/interpreting research	0	0	2	3
Motivating the adult learner	0	0	5	8
Instructing student with learning handicaps	0	0	1	2
Using small group discussion	4	27	0	0
Using the lecture method	2	13	5	8
Using games and simulations	1	7	2	3
Preparing/using lesson plans	1	7	14	23
Using case studies	0	0	2	3
Evaluating teaching/learning	3	20	5	8
Using demos and models	1	7	8	13
Using role-playing	2	13	5	8
Providing field experience	0	0	1	2
Other	1	7	0	0
Chi square = 29.86	Probability = .012			

the teaching skills as essential to preservice training, and the remaining eight skills were not thought to be essential. On the other hand, the respondents with university education perceived all but

two of the teaching skills listed as essential to preservice training.

Though the percentages are low, twenty-seven percent of respondents with college education or less chose using small group discussion as the most essential teaching skill for preservice training while none of the university educated respondents considered this an essential skill. The highest number of those with college education or less (23%) perceived preparing and using lesson plans was the most essential teaching skill to be included in preservice training, but only seven percent of respondents with university education thought this was an essential skill.

Commitment to Training Format

Table 5.11 shows that seventy-five percent of those respondents with a college level of education or less would commit to an undergraduate degree program. An obvious difference is that only thirty-six percent of those respondents who already have a university education would commit to a similar program.

Table 5.11

Significant Difference in Commitment to Training Format by Highest Level of Schooling

Format	Level			
	College - (18)		University (62)	
	f	%	f	%
Undergraduate degree program	9	75	17	36
Chi square = 4.37	Probability = .036			

Responsibility for Training

Both sets of respondents chose local parent education group as the body most responsible for training. One significant difference, as Table 5.12 shows, is that the respondents who had university training suggested several names in the "other" section who should be responsible for training. Those with less education perceived regional parent education group and community college as responsible bodies more frequently than did those with more education.

Table 5.12

Significant Difference in Responsible Body for Training by Highest Level of Schooling

Responsible Body	Level			
	College - (18)		University (62)	
	f	%	f	%
Individual parent educator	1	6	2	3
Employing agency	2	12	4	5
Local parent education group	4	24	24	39
Regional parent education group	3	18	2	3
Community college	3	18	3	5
University	3	18	9	15
Other	1	6	19	31
Chi square = 12.71		Probability = .047		

Summary

Eighteen of the respondents had high school to college levels of education while sixty-two had university level of education.

The content areas identified as being significantly different were postpartum period and parenting skills. Respondents with college education or less cited academic education and self-directed study as their most significant source for these areas, while respondents with university education cited self-directed study.

Respondents with college education or less thought that using small group discussion and evaluating teaching and learning were the most essential skills for preservice training, while respondents with university education thought that preparing and using lesson plans and using demonstrations and models were most essential.

Adequacy of Academic Preparation

Respondents indicated either a low or a high adequacy of academic preparation. Eighteen of the respondents said their academic preparation was of low adequacy compared to thirty respondents who said their academic preparation was of high adequacy. Significant differences between these two groups were seen in the sources of content areas, the sources of teaching skills and the essential content areas for preservice training.

Sources of Content Areas and Teaching Skills

As Tables 5.13 and 5.14 show all respondents who indicated a low adequacy of academic preparation, perceived themselves to be self-directed in their acquisition of the two teaching skills using case studies, evaluating teaching/learning, and the three content areas needs and life stages, nutrition and

Table 5.13

Significant Difference Within Source of Content Areas by Adequacy of Academic Preparation

Area	Adequacy of Preparation			
	Low (18)		High (30)	
	f	%	f	%
Needs and life stages				
preservice	1	7	0	0
inservice	3	20	1	6
academic	4	27	14	82
self-directed	7	47	2	12
Chi square = 10.24		Probability = .016		
Nutrition				
preservice	1	8	0	0
inservice	2	15	11	46
academic	4	31	10	42
self-directed	6	46	3	13
Chi square = 8.26		Probability = .04		
Postpartum period				
preservice	1	10	1	5
inservice	2	20	2	10
academic	1	10	14	67
self-directed	6	60	4	19
Chi square = 8.88		Probability = .03		

postpartum period. Those who had a high level of adequacy in academic preparation, were in the main academically trained or, in the case of the content

area of nutrition, had acquired this in an inservice training program.

Table 5.14

Significant Differences in Sources of Teaching Skills By Adequacy of Academic Preparation

Skill	Adequacy of Preparation			
	Low (18)		High (30)	
	f	%	f	%
Using Case Studies				
preservice	0	0	0	0
inservice	1	11	1	6
academic	0	0	8	47
self-directed	8	89	8	47
Chi square = 6.1		Probability = .04		
Evaluating Teaching-Learning				
preservice	1	7	4	15
inservice	4	27	6	22
academic	3	20	14	52
self-directed	7	47	3	11
Chi square = 8.15		Probability = .04		

Essential Content Areas in Preservice

Significant differences between those who reported either a high or a low adequacy of academic preparation were found in the choice of content areas which are

considered essential to preservice training (Table 5.15). In the content area, the family as a Canadian institution, one hundred percent of the respondents with low adequacy identified this area as essential compared to none (0%) of those with high adequacy of academic preparation. Over eighty percent of those with high adequacy of preparation thought psychology of the pregnant couple, biological sciences and variations in labour and delivery to be essential to preservice training.

Table 5.15

Significant Differences Across Essential Content Areas by Adequacy of Academic Preparation

Area	Adequacy of Preparation			
	Low (18)		High (30)	
	f	%	f	%
Family as a Canadian institution	1	100	0	0
Marriage preparation/enrichment	3	50	3	50
Family resources	3	60	2	40
Family relationships	8	53	7	47
Family variations	6	86	1	14
Human development	9	56	7	44
Personality theory	2	29	5	71
Needs and life stages	10	63	6	35
Psychology of pregnant couple	2	15	11	85
Biological sciences	1	14	6	86
Nutrition	7	39	11	61
Normal child-bearing cycle	6	30	14	70
Variations in labour/delivery	2	15	11	85
Medical intervention	2	22	7	78
Family centered maternity care	2	29	5	71
Health consumer advocacy	2	40	3	60
Breathing /relaxation techniques	4	22	14	78
Physical/emotional discomforts	2	25	6	7
Postpartum periods	4	50	4	50
Parenting skills	14	54	12	47
Chi square = 31.74		Probability = .03		

Summary

There were eighteen respondents who reported a low adequacy of academic preparation and thirty-one who reported a high adequacy of academic preparation.

The teaching skills identified as being significantly different between groups according to their adequacy of preparation were and the three content areas of needs and life stages, nutrition and the postpartum period and the two teaching skills of using case studies and evaluating teaching/learning. Those with low adequacy of academic preparation cited self-directed study as the most significant source of all the teaching skills and content areas. Those with high adequacy of academic preparation claimed academic education as their source of needs and life stages, postpartum period and evaluating teaching and learning. This group was also self-directed in acquiring using case studies and indicated that inservice training was their source of the content area nutrition.

Those reporting low adequacy of academic preparation cited the family as a Canadian institution as the most essential content area. Those reporting high adequacy of preparation perceived psychology of the pregnant couple, biological sciences and variations in labour and delivery were essential to an preservice training program.

Length of Service

The length of service was divided into three groups according to how long respondents had worked as parent educators: two years or less of service, three or four years; and five or more years. There were seventeen respondent with less than two years of service or less; twenty-one respondents with three or four years of service; and forty-two respondents who had five or more years of experience.

Significant differences among these three groups were apparent in the areas of the sources of content areas and teaching skills, the effectiveness of training approaches, participation in training approaches, barriers to training and essential teaching skills for preservice training.

Sources of Content Areas

As seen in Table 5.16, significant differences were apparent among these groups and the source of two content areas: family relationships and family variations. Those with two years or less of service cited academic education as the most significant source of their information in both of these content areas. Respondents with five or more years of service (46%) indicated that they were self-directed in their acquisition of information about family relationships

as well as family variations (60%). Respondents with three or four years of service also cited self-directed study as their source of family relationship information (36%), but no clear response emerged regarding their acquisition of information on family variations. Though these were not high percentages of respondents, they represent the highest percentages for each group. Those with two years or less of service and those with more than five years claimed not to have had preservice training in these content areas. This was significantly different from respondents in the three to four year length of service, who did claim preservice as a source.

Table 5.16

Significant Difference Within Source of Content Areas by Length of Service

Area Source	Length of Service					
	0-2 years (17)		3-4 years (21)		5 years + (42)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Family Relationship						
preservice	0	0	3	21	0	0
inservice	3	38	4	29	4	14
academic	4	50	2	14	11	39
self-directed	1	13	5	36	13	46
Total	8		14		28	
Chi square = 13.96			Probability = .03			
Family Variations						
preservice	0	0	2	29	0	0
inservice	1	17	2	29	5	25
academic	3	50	2	29	2	10
self-directed	2	33	1	14	13	65
Total	6		7		20	
Chi square = 14.43			Probability = .02			

Sources of Teaching Skills

Significant differences were also noted among these groups in terms of the source of the two teaching skills using demonstrations and models and providing field experience (Table 5.7). In the group of respondents with two years or less of service, most reported acquiring these teaching skills through inservice training and least through academic education. Respondents with three to four years of experience cited preservice training and self-directed study as the source of these skills, and respondents with five years of service cited self-directed training and academic education as the most significant source of their skill. Preservice training was the least significant source of these teaching skills used by respondents with five years of service.

The teaching skill of providing field experience opportunities was acquired by sixty percent of the least experienced respondents from inservice training. The second group of respondents was evenly divided between preservice training and self-directed study as the source of this skill, while the third group cited academic education and self-directed study as the greatest sources of this skill.

Table 5.17

Significant Difference Within Source of Teaching Skills by Length of Service

Skill Source	Length of service					
	0-2 years (17)		3-4 years (21)		5 years + (42)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Using demos/models						
preservice	3	25	8	42	3	8
inservice	6	50	5	26	10	26
academic	1	8	2	11	12	31
self-directed	2	17	4	21	14	36
Total	12		19		39	
Chi square = 14.98			Probability = .02			
Providing field experience						
preservice	1	20	3	50	1	7
inservice	3	60	0	0	2	13
academic	0	0	0	0	6	40
self-directed	1	20	3	50	6	40
Total	5		6		15	
Chi square = 14.99			Probability = .02			

Effectiveness of Training Approaches

The effectiveness of parent education workshops and conferences to training was significantly different between respondents who had served for three or four years and those who had served for five years or more.

Educators with three or four years of experience were significantly lower than those with five or more years of experience in their perception of the effectiveness of workshops and conferences in training.

Participation in Training Approaches

Significant differences in participation in training approaches between the groups of respondents in terms of their length of service are shown in Table 5.18. Only twenty percent of the respondents who had taught two years or less participated in local parent education meetings. This was significantly different from those who had taught three or four years (60%) and those who have taught five or more years (61%).

Table 5.18

Significant Differences in Participation in Training Approaches by Length of Service

Type	Length of Service					
	0-2 years (17)		3-4 years (21)		5 years + (42)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Local parent education meetings	3	20	9	60	20	61
Chi square = 7.47			Probability = .02			

Barriers to Participation in Training

The three groups of respondents were compared as to the barriers they saw in participating in training. There was a significant difference among groups concerning the barrier job responsibilities. Sixty-two percent of the respondents who had taught for five years or more claimed this as an obstacle to their participation in training, while only twenty-nine percent of those who had been teaching for three or four years cited job responsibilities as a barrier (Table 5.19).

Table 5.19

Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Length of Service

Barrier	Length of Service					
	0-2 years (17)		3-4 years (21)		5 years + (42)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Job responsibilities	8	47	6	29	26	62
Chi square = 6.29			Probability = .04			

Purposes for Participating in Training

Significant differences were seen in the purposes of participation in training among groups of respondents when they were compared on their length of service. Those who had taught for two years or less or five years or more cited "improve status in the community" as one of their purposes for being involved in training. This was significantly different from that group of respondents who had taught for three of four years and who did not choose this as a purpose (see Table 5.20).

Table 5.20

Significant Differences in Purpose for Participation in Training by Length of Service

Purpose	Length of Service					
	0-2 years (17)		3-4 years (21)		5 years + (42)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Improve status in community	5	30	0	0	5	12
Chi square = 7.45			Probability = .02			

Essential Teaching Skills for Preservice

Table 5.21 shows significant differences in the choices of essential teaching skills for preservice among parent educators by varying lengths of service. There were seven instances in which one of the groups chose a skill as being essential when the other two groups claimed it was not an essential skill.

In three of these skills, seventeen percent, eleven percent and seventeen percent, respectively, of those who had taught three or four years chose the skills of preparing and using A.V. materials, using case studies and providing field experiences as being essential to preservice. Those who had taught two years or less and five years or more did not see these skills as essential (0 percent).

In the other four skills, five percent, five percent, three percent and three percent, respectively, of those who had taught five years or more chose the skills of developing course objectives, reading and interpreting research literature, using the lecture method and various other skills as being essential to preservice while those who had taught less than five years did not see these skills as essential.

The highest numbers in all three groups chose evaluating teaching and learning as an essential preservice skill. Twenty-five percent of the

Table 5.21

Significant Differences Across Essential Preservice Skills by Length of Service

Skill	Length of Service					
	0-2 years (17)		3-4 years (21)		5 years + (42)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Organizing/managing a class	1	6	1	6	1	3
Developing course objectives	0	0	0	0	2	5
Preparing/using AV material	0	0	3	17	0	0
Reading/interpreting research	0	0	0	0	2	5
Motivating the adult learner	1	6	0	0	2	5
Instructing students with handicaps	0	0	0	0	0	0
Using small group discussion	1	2	2	11	5	13
Using the lecture method	0	0	0	0	1	3
Using games and simulations	2	13	0	0	2	5
Preparing/using lesson plans	2	13	2	11	3	8
Using case studies	0	0	2	11	0	0
Evaluating teaching-learning	4	25	3	17	15	39
Using demos and models	4	25	0	0	2	5
Using role-playing techniques	1	6	2	11	3	8
Providing field experience opportunities	0	0	3	17	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	1	3

Chi square = 44.2 Probability = .03

respondents with two years or less service thought using demonstrations and models was an important skill, and seventeen percent of those with three or four years considered providing field experience opportunities as essential.

Summary

Significant differences were seen in the sources of the teaching skills: using demonstrations and models and providing field experiences, and the content areas: family relationships and family variations. The most significant source of the teaching skills for those with two years or less was inservice training, for those with three or four year experience, preservice training and self-directed study and for those with five or more years self-directed study was most significant.

In the acquisition of content areas, those with two years or less experience cited academic education as the most significant source, while those with three or four years considered self-directed study most significant. More respondents with two years or less of experience indicated that improving status in the community was a reason to participate in training than did other respondents. Evaluating teaching and learning was a teaching skill thought to be essential to preservice training in the main by those with five+ or more years of service.

Type of Parent Education

Parent educators were divided into two groups, those who taught prenatal classes and those who taught

all other types of parent education. There were fifty-two respondents who taught prenatal education and twenty-eight respondents who taught all other kinds of parent education.

Significant differences between these two types of parent educators were found in their sources of teaching skills, content areas, in the choice of content areas which were essential to preservice training, and in the basis of the selection of parent educators.

Sources of Teaching Skills

Fifty-three percent of the "other" type of parent educators were self-directed in their acquisition of the teaching skill of preparing and using audio-visual equipment (Table 5.22). Fifty percent of the prenatal parent educators identified academic education as the source of the teaching skill of preparing and using lesson plans. While thirty-three percent of these prenatal educators acquired using demonstrations and models in preservice training none of the "other" type of parent educators found this a source of this teaching skill.

Table 5.22

Significant Difference Within Sources of Teaching Skills by Type of Parent Education

Skill	Type			
	Prenatal (52)		Other (28)	
	f	%	f	%
Preparing/using A.V.				
preservice	8	36	1	6
inservice	8	36	6	35
academic	5	23	1	6
self-directed	1	5	9	53
Chi square = 14.4	Probability = .002			
Preparing/using lesson plans				
preservice	5	25	0	0
inservice	1	5	4	22
academic	10	50	6	33
self-directed	4	20	8	44
Chi square = 9.05	Probability = .028			
Using demos and models				
preservice	7	33	0	0
inservice	5	24	6	32
academic	3	14	6	32
self-directed	6	29	7	37
Chi square = 8.09	Probability = .044			

Sources of Content Areas

In three of the four content areas which were found to be significantly different between those who were prenatal educators and those who were other types of parent educators, the source for prenatal educators was academic education and the source for other parent educators was self-directed study. As Table 5.23 shows, only the content area of parenting skills was claimed by prenatal educators as being acquired predominantly through self-directed study, while for other parent educators it was acquired from inservice training.

Table 5.23

Significant Sources Within Content Areas by Type of Parent Education

Area	Type			
	Prenatal (52)		Other (28)	
	f	%	f	%
Nutrition				
preservice	2	1	0	0
inservice	2	26	2	18
academic	10	53	2	18
self-directed	2	11	7	64
Totals	16		11	
Chi square = 14.43	Probability = .02			
Management of childbirth				
preservice	6	30	0	0
inservice	0	0	2	40
academic	11	55	1	20
self-directed	3	15	2	40
Totals	20		5	
Chi square = 11.77	Probability = .008			
Physical/emotional discomforts				
preservice	5	22	0	0
inservice	2	8	0	0
academic	13	57	0	0
self-directed	3	13	2	100
Totals	23		2	
Chi square = 8.69	Probability = .033			
Parenting skills				
preservice	1	7	2	9
inservice	1	7	10	46
academic	3	20	4	18
self-directed	10	67	6	27
Totals	15		22	
Chi square = 7.79	Probability = .05			

Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training

While there was no significant difference in which teaching skills were essential for preservice training between those who teach prenatal education and those who teach all other types of parent education (others) there were differences between these types in terms of essential content areas (Table 5.24). None (0%) of the other type of parent educators thought that the nine content areas pertaining to prenatal education were essential to a preservice training program. The prenatal educators, on the other hand, chose as most essential (59%) the psychology of the pregnant couple and breathing and relaxation techniques for labour and delivery. Ninety-two percent of the other educators chose parenting skills as an essential skill for preservice training.

Based upon combined Chi square analyses for each of the five most essential areas, a significant difference was found between the perception of prenatal educators compared to any other parent educators (probability = .008).

Table 5.24

Significant Differences Across Most Essential Content by Type of Parent Educator

Area	Type			
	Prenatal (52)		Other (28)	
	f	%	f	%
Family as a Canadian institution	2	8	1	4
Marriage preparation/enrichment	1	4	7	31
Family resources	0	0	8	36
Family relationships	6	25	16	17
Family variations	1	4	7	31
Human development	4	17	17	74
Personality theory	1	4	8	3
Needs and life stages	6	25	18	79
Psychology of pregnant couple	14	59	1	4
Biological sciences	4	17	2	9
Nutrition	3	12	7	31
Normal child-bearing cycle	9	38	0	0
Variations in labour/delivery	9	38	0	0
Medical intervention	10	42	0	0
Family centered maternity care	8	33	0	0
Health consumer advocacy	1	4	0	0
Breathing/relaxation techniques	14	59	0	0
Physical/emotional discomforts	10	42	0	0
Postpartum period	6	25	1	4
Parenting skills	10	43	21	92

Selection of Parent Educators

A difference was apparent between those parent educators who teach prenatal classes and those who teach all other types of parent education concerning the basis of selection of parent educators. Ninety-two percent of other parent educators compared to sixty percent of prenatal educators cited personal characteristics as a basis of selection (Table 5.25).

Table 5.25

Significant Differences in Basis of Selection of Parent Educators by Type of Parent Educator

Basis	Type			
	Prenatal (52)		Other (28)	
	f	%	f	%
Personal characteristics	15	60	22	92
Chi square = 6.64	Probability = .01			

Barriers to Participation in Training

The barriers to training cited by the two types of parent educators were not enough time and not enough information about the program. As Table 5.26 shows, sixty-seven percent of the other parent educators claimed not enough time as an obstacle to participation in training, yet only thirty-six percent of the prenatal educators saw this as a barrier. The other barrier -- not enough information about the program -- was seen as a barrier by thirty-two percent of the prenatal educators, but by only four percent of the other parent educators.

Table 5.26

Significant Difference in Barriers to Participation in Training by Type of Parent Educator

Barrier	Type			
	Prenatal (52)		Other (28)	
	f	%	f	%
Not enough time	9	36	16	67
Not enough information	8	32	1	4
Chi square = 14.43	Probability = .02			

Summary

Significant differences were noted between prenatal and other educators in the sources of teaching skills of preparing and using audio-visual materials, preparing and using lesson plans and using demonstrations and models and in the content areas of nutrition, management of childbirth education, physical and emotional discomforts and parenting skills. Those who teach prenatal classes claimed preservice training as the most significant source of acquiring the teaching skills, and academic education as the most significant source of the content areas. Those who teach other types of education claimed self-directed study as most significant in acquisition of both teaching skills and content areas. Prenatal educators viewed as essential those content areas specific to prenatal content, while other educators saw as essential those content areas general to parenting.

Primary Role

Parent educators defined their primary role as either supervisory or teaching. There were seventy teachers and ten supervisors identified from the questionnaire responses. Significant differences between these two roles were seen in the essential content areas for preservice training, sources of

teaching skills, the barriers to participation in training, the types of commitment to training and in the responsible body for training.

Essential Content Areas in Preservice Training

While there were no significant differences apparent between roles concerning which teaching skills were essential to a preservice training program, there were significant differences between roles as to essential content areas (Table 5.27). In three areas of the family as a Canadian institution, biological sciences or postpartum period, none (0%) of the supervisors considered these as essential to a preservice program while all of the teachers who responded considered them as essential. The highest numbers of teachers (from 88% to 97%) chose all nine of those content areas which are pertinent to prenatal education as essential compared to very low percentages (3 to 12%) of the supervisors. The highest number of supervisors who responded were thirty-six percent who considered family variations as essential to preservice, yet sixty-four percent of the teachers also considered this as an essential area.

Table 5.27

Significant Difference Across Essential Content Areas for Preservice Training by Primary Role

Area	Role			
	Supervisor (10)		Teacher (70)	
	f	%	f	%
Family as a Canadian institution	0	0	4	100
Marriage preparation/enrichment	3	30	7	70
Family resource	2	22	7	78
Family relationships	5	19	22	82
Family variations	4	36	7	64
Human development	5	18	23	82
Personality theory	4	40	6	60
Needs and life stages	4	14	24	86
Psychology of pregnant couple	1	5	18	95
Biological sciences	0	0	8	100
Nutrition	3	12	22	88
Normal child-bearing cycle	1	4	27	96
Variations in labour/delivery	1	5	18	95
Medical intervention	1	7	13	93
Family centered maternity care	1	9	10	91
Health consumer advocacy	1	10	9	90
Breathing/relaxation techniques	1	3	32	97
Physical/emotional discomforts	1	8	12	92
Postpartum period	0	0	16	100
Parenting skills	7	14	43	8
Chi square = 30.26		Probability = .048		

Sources of Teaching Skills

The source of the teaching skills of instructing students with learning handicaps and using case studies were two teaching skills on which the two roles of parent educators differed (Table 5.28). Eighty-four percent of the teachers cited self-directed study as the source of instructing students with learning handicaps, while only twenty percent of the supervisors

Table 5.28

Significant Difference Within Source of Teaching Skills by Primary Role

Skill	Role			
	Supervisor (10)		Teacher (70)	
	f	%	f	%
Instructing students with handicaps				
preservice	1	20	0	0
inservice	1	20	1	5
academic	2	40	2	11
self-directed	1	20	16	84
Chi square = 9.198	Probability = .026			
Using case studies				
preservice	0	0	1	3
inservice	2	33	3	9
academic	4	67	10	29
self-directed	0	0	20	59
Chi square = 8.17	Probability = .04			

were self-directed. The highest percent of the supervisors -- forty percent -- gained this information from academic education. Sixty-seven percent of the supervisors were academically oriented in their acquisition of the teaching skills of using case studies, while fifty-nine percent of the teachers were self-directed in this skill.

Barriers to Participation in Training

Ninety percent of the supervisors identified job responsibilities as a barrier to their participation in training, while, as Table 5.29 shows, only forty-four percent of those parent educators filling a teaching role saw this as a barrier.

Table 5.29

Significant Differences in Barriers to Participation in Training by Primary Role

Barrier	Role			
	Supervisor (10)		Teacher (70)	
	f	%	f	%
Job responsibilities	9	90	31	44
Chi square = 5.6	Probability = .018			

Commitment to Training Format

Table 5.30 shows that seventy-three percent of those parent educators who considered themselves in a teaching role would commit to training which would involve a diploma program. Only twenty-nine percent of those parent educators who were in supervisory roles would commit to this type of training.

Table 5.30

Significant Differences in Types of Commitment to Training by Primary Role

Type	Role			
	Supervisor (10)		Teacher (70)	
	f	%	f	%
Diploma program	2	29	40	73
Chi square = 5.54	Probability = .018			

Responsibility for Training

As Table 5.31 shows, parent educators who fill a supervisory role chose only two of the six possible responsible bodies for training while those filling teaching roles chose some of all the possible bodies. Forty percent of the supervisors and twenty-three percent of the teachers suggested other responsible agencies.

Table 5.31

Significant Difference in Responsible Body for Training by Primary Role

Responsible Body	Role			
	Supervisor (10)		Teacher (70)	
	f	%	f	%
Individual parent educators	0	0	3	4
Employing agency	3	30	2	3
Local parent education groups	3	30	25	36
Regional parent education groups	0	0	5	7
Community College	0	0	6	9
University	0	0	12	17
Other	4	40	16	23

Chi square = 14.97 Probability = .02

Summary

All of the teachers thought that the content areas of the family as a Canadian institution, biological science and postpartum period were essential to preservice training programs compared to none of the supervisors. The teachers also indicated that nine of the content areas pertinent to prenatal education were essential to preservice training while the superviors thought these were the least essential. For the supervisors, their academic education was the most significant source of the teaching skills of instructing students with handicaps and using case studies while teachers identified self-directed study as the most significant source. More teachers than supervisors would commit to a diploma program, perhaps related to supervisors seeing job responsiblities as a barrier to their participation in training. Teachers suggested that local parent organizations should be responsible for training.

Summary

Though the numbers were small in all of the groupings, some significant differences were found on all independent variables but age.

Significant differences were found most often in the sources of content areas and teaching skills, as

well as in which of these areas or skills were essential to preservice training. Several differences seemed rather obvious. Prenatal educators wanted to include content areas with a prenatal focus in preservice training, whereas other parent educators thought that parenting courses were most essential. Similarly, the source of skills and content areas for those with highly adequate academic preparation was their academic education, while it was self-directed study for those with low adequacy of academic preparation.

Some of the following differences were significant but were difficult to explain: men who could not participate in training because they didn't have enough energy or didn't enjoy studying; women who had high needs for training; respondents who had high school and college levels of school who claimed academic education as the most significant source of the areas of the post partum period and parenting; and respondents with five years or more of service who were self-directed in the acquisition of certain teaching skills and content areas.

CHAPTER 6

Summary, Conclusions and Implications

Summary

The Problem

The main purpose of this study was to determine the need for parent educator training as perceived by parent educators. The research was carried out in greater Edmonton.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To identify and gather demographic and professional data on parent educators;

2. To identify the content areas used by parent educators;

3. To identify the teaching skills used by parent educators;

4. To identify the training sources used by parent educators;

5. To identify the training needs of parent educators as perceived by parent educators;

6. To ascertain the perception of parent educators regarding the delivery of parent educator training; and

7. To determine the relationships between selected demographic and professional characteristics and parent educators' perception of training needs concerning content areas, teaching skills, training sources, delivery alternatives and professional development.

Procedure

A questionnaire was developed with one hundred and twenty-one items. The questionnaires were mailed to one hundred and thirty-seven parent educators on February 17, 1986 with a followup letter sent March 10, 1986. There were eighty returns representing a fifty-eight percent return rate. Data analysis was accomplished via computer processing. Frequency counts and percentages were obtained to indicate the distribution of responses of the total sample to each item. T tests and F tests were used for analysis of continuous data; Chi square was used for analysis of categorical data; and content analysis was applied to comments.

Findings

Background information. Most parent educators in greater Edmonton are female, have university degrees which prepared them adequately for their roles as parent educators and have worked in this capacity for five or more years.

Use of teaching skills and content areas. Of the sixteen teaching skills which were common to adult education, only three skills were not used by more than sixty percent of the respondents. These skills concerned providing field experiences and instructing students with handicaps. The majority of respondents were using fourteen of the twenty content areas presented as choices.

Five teaching skills were cited by the majority of respondents as being essential to a preservice training program for parent educators. These skills were preparing and using lesson plans, using small group discussion, motivating the adult learner, evaluating the teaching-learning process and developing course objectives. Only the content area of parenting skills was chosen as being essential for preservice training.

Sources of teaching skills and content areas. Of the four sources of teaching skills and content areas, respondents cited their academic education as being most significant. Self-directed study, agency

inservice and agency preservice were next ordered in significance.

Training needs. The majority of respondents reported the selection of parent educators as being very important, with the factor of "being a parent" as being least important in the screening process. Agency inservice, self-directed study and agency preservice were given equal importance as training methods. There was a very high level of need for more inservice training. A majority of respondents had been involved in parent education conferences or other non-credit workshops, seventy-eight percent were self-directed in their approaches to training.

Parent education workshops and conferences were seen as the most effective approach to training. Eighty-six percent of respondents stated that they participated in training because it increased job effectiveness and, if the circumstances were right, they would commit to a program of study which resulted in a certificate. The responsibility for training was thought to lie mostly with local parent education groups.

Professional development. The most pressing training needs identified by respondents concerned inservice. Comments were that inservice should be mandatory and ongoing since it served the purposes of

up-dating and standardizing the content and process of parent education as well as providing support to parent educators.

Two main suggestions were proposed for the improvement of the delivery of training programs for parent educators: the implementing of a central agency for training and the development of an association for parent educators. The central training agency would help promote professional standards for certification of parent educators, meet the need for more trainers, and develop more flexible training approaches.

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

The number of responses to this survey was comparatively low (58%), placing limitations on the generalizability of the results. Another limitation was that imposed by the questionnaire and the necessarily restricted number of items.

Within these limitations, however, the study provided an indication of the training needs of parent educators and information was gathered for each of the objectives presented in the development of the study.

Objective 1: To identify and gather demographic and professional data on parent educators.

That the majority of parent educators were young to middle-aged educators who held university degrees which they claimed adequately prepared them for their academic education was common in the literature describing adult educators. The low numbers of male respondents spoke to the recency of men being involved in all aspects of parenting, including leading parent education programs. There were few parent educators who were supervisors. Since parent education usually involves educators who work either only part-time or as a part of another job, the supervisory function is probably not a role into which parent educators remain as evidenced by the disparity between educators (53%) who have worked five years or more and supervisors (13%). The small numbers of parent educators who were involved in training of parent educators fits with the low numbers in supervisory roles. In the main, parent educators teach either parents who are pregnant or parent who have children. This also matches descriptions of parent educators such as nurses who would teach some prenatal classes as part of their job. Other prenatal classes would be taught on a part-time basis.

Objective 2: To identify the content areas used by parent educators.

All of the twenty content areas presented as common to parent education were being used. Parenting skills, human development and nutrition were used most followed by postpartum period and physical and emotional discomforts of pregnancy. The most used areas were those which would be used by prenatal education teachers, and parent education teachers -- obviously because these were the highest numbers of respondents. But these areas were also common to family life educators and trainers. The least used content areas had to do with the family: resources, its role as a Canadian institution and marriage preparation and enrichment. That there were no additions to this list of content areas is surprising when the literature speaks to the lack of consistency in what parent educators teach.

The most and least used content areas coincide with the content areas which were thought to be essential for preservice training. Obviously, an area which is being used by educators should be included in preservice training.

Objective 3: To identify the teaching skills used by parent educators.

Of the fifteen teaching skills common to teaching parent education to adults, all but one were used. The most commonly used skills were various methods of

teaching: lecture, demonstration and models, audio-visual and small groups. Also used by most respondents were the general teaching skills of developing course objectives, preparing and using lesson plans and evaluating teaching and learning.

Two of the least used skills were providing field experience and instructing students with handicaps. The skill of using case studies was not used by any of the parent educators. This was perhaps a limitation in the questionnaire resulting in misinterpretation of skills to do with handicapped students and using case studies, since it is unlikely that less than twenty-four percent of eighty respondents instruct students with handicaps and that none of the respondents use case studies. The inclusion of low English communication abilities not just physical disabilities was perhaps misunderstood by respondents as was case studies which were meant as sample parenting scenarios. The addition of three other skills -- ROPE, a system of instruction, guest speakers and sensitivity training -- may point to further misunderstandings of the skills.

The most used skill, that of developing course objectives, was also the skill which was thought essential to preservice training. Likewise, the skills of providing field experiences and using case studies

were not used and were not considered essential to preservice training programs.

Objective 4: To identify the training sources used by parent educators.

The greatest source of both teaching skills and content areas was academic education followed by self-directed study, inservice and then preservice training. The literature supports this in that adult educators report their academic education as being adequate for their teaching. Certainly, in an area which has little formal training for educators, acquiring skills and content will be common through self study, while inservice and preservice will be less likely sources.

The teaching skills and content areas which were being used most and those skills and areas which were acquired most commonly through each source were the same:

1. Academic education was the greatest source for acquiring the skill of using the lecture method and the content of human development and biological sciences,

2. In self-directed study respondents acquired the skill of organizing and managing the classroom and using group discussions as well as the content to do with parenting,

3. Respondents acquired the skill of reading and interpreting research literature and the content area of nutrition in inservice training; and

4. In preservice training respondents acquired the skill of preparing and using audio-visual materials and breathing and relaxation techniques.

Objective 5: To identify the training needs of parent educators as perceived by parent educators.

Training needs were identified through two parts of the questionnaire, the second of which invited written comments. Selection of parent educators should be based on knowledge and ability to teach. Personal characterics and being a parent were given little emphasis.

Inservice training was deemed the most important method of training and the level of need for this method of training was very high. Self-directed study was an equally important method of training, reflected in the fact that this method was also a common source of teaching skills and content areas. Academic education was a method which was not accorded much importance in spite of being a high source of skills and content areas.

Workshops and conferences on parent education were thought to be most effective as training approaches with college and university credit courses as least

effective. This is in contrast to the fact that more parent educators were self-directed in their training last year (78%) than attended workshops or conferences (46%). Since most parent educators had university degrees it was obvious that they would not commit to another degree in parent education. A certificate or diploma program would be committed to by the majority of respondents (84% and 53%, respectively).

Eight percent of respondents participated in training because it led to a university degree. Most of the participation in training was done because it increased job effectiveness or satisfied a personal need. These reasons are reversed in the literature where educators participate in training for personal reasons because they perceive of their academic education as sufficient for job effectiveness.

On the other hand, the literature spoke specifically of the same barriers to participation in training: home and job responsibilities and pressures of time which were listed by respondents. Fear of failure and entrance requirements were given low priorities as barriers to participation in training by respondents who had academic backgrounds which would be inconsistent with these concerns.

The reponsibility for training was thought to lie mostly with the local parent education group and least

with the individual parent educator. This is certainly consistent with the literature which sees agency specific training as necessary. The inconsistency is apparent in that parent educators who were very much self-directed in their training, both in the responses to this questionnaire and in the literature deem themselves the least responsible for their training. Another inconsistency is seen between academic education adequately preparing parent educators for their roles and having very few (23%) respondents cite university and community college as the body responsible for training. One quarter of the responses saw others as being responsible for training: social services agencies, a professional association, and public health.

Through the open-ended question such training needs as access to resources, improvements to teaching standards and mutual support were mentioned. Certainly the literature speaks to all of these needs as part of successful training programs.

Objective 6: To ascertain the perception of parent educators regarding the delivery of parent educator training.

Parent educators perceived the need for improvements in the access to training, the content of training and the centralization of training.

Objective 7: To determine the relationships between selected demographic and professional characteristics and parent educators' perceptions of training needs concerning content areas, teaching skills, training sources and delivery alternatives.

Significant differences were examined between groups based upon seven demographic and professional characteristics: age, gender, level of schooling, adequacy of academic education, length of service, type of parent education and primary role.

There were no significant differences between respondents according to age. Though the number of male respondents was small -- eleven compared to sixty-six women -- there were some significant differences by gender. Men cited preservice and inservice training as the most significant sources of their training while women were self-directed in their training. These differences were apparent in the teaching skills of using case studies and evaluating the teaching-learning process, and the content areas of family relationships, personality theory and parenting skills. Women expressed a greater need for inservice training, and more women would commit to training which would result in a certificate. There were more women who thought the nine content areas related to prenatal eduction were essential to inservice training programs, while

men thought that family resources was the most essential area. Women respondents taught prenatal education more than did the men through their nursing careers so they would think this prenatal area was essential.

The variable concerning level of schooling was grouped by those with high school to college levels of education and those with university education as their highest level of schooling. There were eighteen respondents in Group I and sixty-two respondents in Group II. Again, though the numbers were unevenly matched, significant differences were found. One obvious difference was the source of the acquisition of two content areas: postpartum period information and parenting. The group of respondents who were university educated cited academic education as their most significant source of inservice training while those with college or less were self-directed in their training. Although the numbers were very small, on ten of the fifteen teaching skills these two groups were opposed with one group saying the skill was essential and the other saying it was not essential (0%). Those with university education perceived that using small group discussion and evaluating teaching and learning were most essential skills for preservice training, while those with college or less perceived preparing

and using lesson plans and using demonstrations and models as most essential skills.

Adequacy of academic preparation was reported by eighteen repondents with low adequacy and thirty-one with high adequacy. Those with low adequacy of academic preparation perceived they were self-directed in the acquisition of using case studies, evaluating teaching and learning, needs and life stages, nutrition and the postpartum period. Those with high adequacy of academic preparation cited their academic education and self-directed study as the most important source of the same skills and areas. The contents areas of psychology of the pregnant couple, biological sciences and variations in labour and delivery as essential to preservice training which those with low adequacy said the family as a Canadian insitution was most essential.

Respondents were grouped according to their length of service: two years or less of service, three or four years of service and those with five or more years of service. Those with two years or less of service reported their academic education was most significant compared to those with more than five years of service who were self-directed in acquiring the content areas of family relationships and family variations. In the acquisition of the teaching skills using demonstrations and models and providing field experiences, those with

five years or more again perceived academic training was most important and those with two years or less cited inservice training as most significant. Improving status in the community was given as a reason to participate in training by those with two years or less of experience.

Of all the parent educators, fifty-two taught prenatal classes and twenty-eight taught all other types. In the acquisition of the teaching skills of preparing and using audio-visual material, preparing and using lesson plans and using demonstrations and models, the prenatal educators cited preservice training as the most significant source while the group of other educators indicated self-directed study was most significant. In the content areas of nutrition, management of childbirth education, physical and emotional discomforts of pregnancy and parenting skills, the prenatal educators cited their academic education as most significant and the other educators reported that they were most significantly self-directed in their study. If the prenatal teachers were in the main nurses, then their agency preservice and their academic education would be the most likely source of these areas and skills.

Supervisors counted as only ten compared to seventy teachers. While there were no differences

between them as to use of teaching skills, the teachers thought that the content areas of family as a Canadian institution, biological sciences and postpartum period were essential to preservice, but none of the supervisors thought them essential. Teachers cited self-directed study as the source of instructing students with handicaps and using case studies compared to supervisors who claimed academic education as the source of these skills. Teachers were much more likely to present job responsiblities as a barrier to participating in training and were also more likely to commit to a diploma program than were supervisors. Supervisors were quite adamant about only employing agency, local parent education group and others as being responsible agency for training, while teachers were open to any body being responsible.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for practice and for further research.

Implications for practice.

1. Academic education was a source of training which seemed significant to respondents regardless of their age, gender, type of parent education, length of service, level of schooling or adequacy of preparation. Consideration should be given to the development and

delivery of postsecondary curricula which would meet the preservice and inservice training needs of parent educators.

2. Preservice training should not be viewed as an end in itself but rather as a beginning in the continuum of training in this area. Parent educators will benefit from the continuity of both preservice and inservice education.

3. Inservice training should serve as the vehicle for continuing education and professional development of parent educators. Interagency cooperation in the provision of this training should be encouraged in order to make it not only available but effective and efficient.

4. Self-directed study in parent education can be an effective method of training. It should be encouraged through the establishment of a centralized data base of resources available to parent educators.

5. The training needs of parent educators could be met through the establishment of an association of parent educators. This organization could provide an opportunity for the centralization of resources, a vehicle for the standardization of training, and the support of parent educators on an ongoing basis.

Further study.

This study was directed toward the perceived need of parent educators for training in greater Edmonton. It was evident that respondents placed great importance on the need for content area knowledge and teaching skills.

A number of research areas could be addressed to further knowledge of parent educator training. These are:

1. Useful studies could be carried out to determine the ways in which the needs for training and practical experience for instructors could be implemented and maintained.

2. There is a similarity between adult education and parent education. Research results of the training needs of adult educators may have some implications for parent educator training.

3. The present study was limited to the greater Edmonton area and indeed surveyed a very small population. This research should be replicated province-wide, and should identify those parent educators who have additional, primary job responsibilities.

4. The number of respondents who were male or who held supervisory positions were small. Further

research may identify special needs of these groups of parent educators.

5. The quality of parent education is a function of the quality of training of parent educators. Further research is needed to determine how the application of current training directly affects the community for whom this training is ultimately intended -- the parent.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENTATION

TRAINING NEEDS OF PARENT EDUCATORS

I BACKGROUND

Instructions: For each of the background information items, please circle the number of the most appropriate response.

1. Your age is:
   - under 25.....1
   - 25 to 29.....2
   - 30 to 39.....3
   - 40 to 49.....4
   - 50 to 59.....5
   - 60 plus.....6

2. Your sex is:
   - Male.....1
   - Female.....2

3. Your highest level of schooling is:
   - some high school.....1
   - high school graduate.....2
   - technical/vocational training.....3
   - some college/university.....4
   - college graduate.....5
   - university degree.....6
   - university graduate degree.....7

4. How adequately did your academic education prepare you for your role as a parent educator?

very low adequacy ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high adequacy

5. How long have you been a parent educator?
   - Less than one year.....1
   - 1 - 2 years.....2
   - 3 - 4 years.....3
   - 5 or more years.....4

6. What type of parent education do you teach? (Circle all that apply.)

Prenatal (parents who are pregnant).....1
Parent (parents who have children).....2
Family life (students of school age).....3
Parent educators (persons training as parent educators).....4
Other (please specify).....5

7. What is your primary role in parent education? (Circle only one.)
   - Supervisor.....1
   - Teacher.....2

II CONTENT AREAS OF PARENT EDUCATION

1. Listed below are a variety of content areas in parent education. Please read through the list carefully and check (__✓__) those areas which you use in your teaching. For each area that you have checked, circle a number to indicate the training or education source that was most significant for you in acquiring knowledge in this content area. (Circle only one for each content area checked.) The training or education sources are:

    1. agency preservice training or orientation
    2. agency inservice training
    3. academic education
    4. self-directed study

a. The family as a Canadian institution

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

b. Marriage preparation and enrichment

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

c. Family resources: energy and money

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

d. Family relationships in each life cycle stage

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

e. Family variations (e.g. single or adoptive parent)

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

f. Human development

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

g. Personality theory

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

h. Needs and life stages

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

i. Psychology of the pregnant couple

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

j. Biological sciences: genetics, reproduction

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

k. Nutrition

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

l. Management of the normal child-bearing cycle

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

m. Variations in labour and delivery

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

n. Medical intervention in childbirth

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

o. Family centered maternity care

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

p. Health consumer advocacy

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

q. Breathing and relaxation techniques for chldbirth

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

r. Physical and emotional disconforts in prenancy

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

s. Postpartum period

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

t. Parenting skills

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

2. Of all the above content areas, please indicate the 5 areas that you feel are most essential in a preservice orientation program for parent educators by writing the corresponding letters in the blanks provided.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

III TEACHING SKILLS FOR PARENT EDUCATORS

1. Listed below are a variety of techniques which are used in parent education classrooms. Please read through the list carefully and check (__✓__) those techniques which you use in your teaching. For each area that you have checked, circle a number to indicate which education or training source was most significant for you in acquiring this technique. (Circle only one for each technique checked.) The training or education sources are:

1. agency preservice training or orientation
2. agency inservice training
3. academic education
4. self-directed study

a. Organizing and managing a classroom

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

b. Developing course objectives

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

c. Preparing and using audio-visual equipment

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

d. Reading and interpreting research literature

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

e. Motivating the adult learner

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

f. Instructing students with learning handicaps (e.g. low verbal ability, non-English speaking)

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

g. Using small group discussion

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

h. Using the lecture method

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

i. Using games and simulations

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

j. Preparing and using lesson plans

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

k. Using case studies

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

l. Evaluating the teaching-learning process

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

m. Using demonstrations and models

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

n. Using role-playing techniques

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

o. Providing field experience opportunities

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

p. Other (specify)

_____1.preservice 2.inservice 3.academic 4.self-directed

2. Of all the above teaching techniques, please indicate the 5 skills that you feel are most essential in a preservice orientation training program for parent educators by writing the corresponding letters in the blanks provided.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Please go on to the next page.

IV TRAINING OF PARENT EDUCATORS

For each of these items, please circle the number of the most appropriate response.

1. How important do you feel is the screening of applicants for the job of parent educator?

very low importance ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high importance

2. On which basis should applicants for the job of parent educator be selected? (Circle all that apply.)

Knowledge of content areas.....1
Ability to teach adult students.....2
Personal characteristics.....3
The applicant being a parent him/herself.....4

3. How important do you feel is agency preservice training for parent educators?

very low importance ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high importance

4. How important do you feel is agency inservice training for parent educators?

very low importance ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high importance

5. How important do you feel is academic education for parent educators?

very low importance ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high importance

6. How important do you feel is self-directed study for parent educators?

very low importance ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high importance

7. In your opinion, how effective are the following approaches in providing programs for parent educators?

a. parent education workshops/conferences

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

b. self-directed study

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

c. college or university credit courses

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

d. other non-credit conferences/workshops

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

e. local meetings of parent educators

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

8. Between January 1, 1985 and December 31, 1985, did you participate in any of the following? (Circle 1 or 2 for each.)

a. Parent education conference/workshop. 1 (yes) 2 (no)
b. Other non-credit courses/workshops... 1 (yes) 2 (no)
c. Self-directed study..... 1 (yes) 2 (no)
d. College or university credit courses. 1 (yes) 2 (no)
e. Local meetings of parent educators... 1 (yes) 2 (no)

9. Which of the following reasons have made it difficult or impossible for you to participate in training programs in the past or might prevent you from participating in the future? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Programs not relevant to my needs.....1
b. Programs not offered in the right locations.....2
c. Programs are offered at the wrong time.....3
d. Strict attendance requirements.....4
e. Don't meet the entrance requirements.....5
f. Not enough time.....6
g. Home responsibilities.....7
h. Job responsibilities.....8
i. Not enough energy/too tired.....9
j. Opposition from spouse.....10

k. Not enough information about program.....11
l. Cost (books, tuition, childcare).....12
m. Time required to complete program.....13
n. Responsibilities for children.....14
o. Transportation difficulties and inconvenience...15
p. Not likely to hear about opportunities.....16
q. Don't enjoy studying.....17
r. Programs won't lead to advancement or promotion.18
s. Employer does not encourage me to take courses..19
t. Afraid I might fail a course.....20
u. Other barriers (please specify).....21

c. college or university credit courses

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

d. other non-credit conferences/workshops

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

e. local meetings of parent educators

very low effectiveness ⟵ 1 2 3 4 5 ⟶ very high effectiveness

8. Between January 1, 1985 and December 31, 1985, did you participate in any of the following? (Circle 1 or 2 for each.)

a. Parent education conference/workshop.1 (yes) 2 (no)
b. Other non-credit courses/workshops...1 (yes) 2 (no)
c. Self-directed study.....1 (yes) 2 (no)
d. College or university credit courses.1 (yes) 2 (no)
e. Local meetings of parent educators...1 (yes) 2 (no)

9. Which of the following reasons have made it difficult or impossible for you to participate in training programs in the past or might prevent you from participating in the future? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Programs not relevant to my needs.....1
b. Programs not offered in the right locations.....2
c. Programs are offered at the wrong time.....3
d. Strict attendance requirements.....4
e. Don't meet the entrance requirements.....5
f. Not enough time.....6
g. Home responsibilities.....7
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k. Not enough information about program.....11
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n. Responsibilities for children.....14
o. Transportation difficulties and inconvenience...15
p. Not likely to hear about opportunities.....16
q. Don't enjoy studying.....17
r. Programs won't lead to advancement or promotion.18
s. Employer does not encourage me to take courses..19
t. Afraid I might fail a course.....20
u. Other barriers (please specify).....21

10. In your opinion, what is the level of need for more inservice training programs/opportunities for parent educators?

very low need ← 1 2 3 4 5 → very high need

11. Which of the following purposes would be served by your participation in training programs? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Satisfy a personal need.....1
b. Develop a better self image.....2
c. Improve status in the community.....3
d. Increase job effectiveness.....4
e. Provide a pay increase.....5
f. Lead to a career advancement.....6
g. Lead to a university degree.....7
h. Other (specify).....8

12. If the circumstances were right and courses of interest were available, would you commit yourself to study parent education in any of the following formats? (Circle 1 or 2 for each.)

a. Non-credit workshop or course.....1 (yes) 2 (no)
b. Certificate program.....1 (yes) 2 (no)
c. Diploma program.....1 (yes) 2 (no)
d. Undergraduate degree program.....1 (yes) 2 (no)
e. Graduate degree program.....1 (yes) 2 (no)

13. In your view, who should be most responsible for the training of parent educators? (Circle only the one most responsible.)

a. Individual parent educators.....1
b. Employing agency.....2
c. Local parent education groups.....3
d. Regional parent education groups.....4
e. Community college.....5
f. University.....6
g. Other (specify).....7

Please go on to the last page.

V PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PARENT EDUCATORS

1. Please identify two or three of the most pressing training needs of parent educators.

2. What improvements would you propose for the delivery of training programs for parent educators?

3. What other comments do you have about parent education programs?

Thank you.

APPENDIX B

COVERING LETTER

Dear

As part of my master's program, I have designed a survey to determine the training needs of parent educators. A questionnaire has been developed to provide parent educators the opportunity to evaluate their professional training, to identify those factors which hinder or facilitate training activities, and to suggest practical improvements for training programs.

The information obtained from this survey will benefit persons contemplating careers in this field by providing a description of the knowledge and skills required by parent educators. The study will provide information regarding the background of parent educators and their professional development. The results of the study may also be used in formulating a set guidelines to modify existing training programs or to assist in designing new training programs.

The sample for the survey was drawn from the membership of the Edmonton Area Birth Educators and the Parenting Resources Committee of Edmonton. Additional parent educators who are independent of these committees were identified through related agencies and by word of mouth contacts.

The success of this study depends upon a high rate of return, so your cooperation is very important. All responses to this survey will be held in the strictest confidence and they will be reported only in summary form.

Please complete the survey as soon as possible and mail it in the enclosed envelope no later than 24 February 1986. Thank you for your participation.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact me at 465 1976, or evenings at 487 0547.

Sincerely,

Carol Humphries
Graduate Student

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

7711 174
Street
Edmonton,
Alberta
T5T 0G4

6 March 1986

Dear

In mid February, I sent you a questionaire to complete regarding the training needs of Parent Educators.

This is to remind you to send this back as soon as possible. If you have returned the questionnaire already, thank you again for your time.

Carol
Humphries,

Graduate
Student